

SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY.

# TWO PAGES *from* ROMAN HISTORY==

1. PLEB LEADERS & LABOUR LEADERS
2. THE WARNING OF THE GRACCHI

by DANIEL De LEON

Printed and Published by the  
SOCIALIST LABOUR PRESS,  
39 SOUTH BRIDGE, EDINBURGH

6<sup>d</sup>.



T/508/6/7/62

## Two Pages from Roman History

---

By DANIEL DE LEON.

---

### I.—PLEBS LEADERS AND LABOUR LEADERS.

---

COMRADES OF SECTION NEW YORK,—

It is now close on sixteen years since a "cat's-paw" of the Labour Movement drew me within its whirl. It is now close on twelve years that I have been intimately connected with the Movement, my whole time, my whole thought devoted to it. A certain impression that I gained at a very early date of my connection with the Movement has grown upon me with ripened experience. As a rule it happens that when one joins a movement of this magnitude, with all the natural greenness that I did in 1886, he, after a few years of activity, finds it necessary to wipe out a good many of the notions he came with, and a good many of the impressions he gathered at the start. And so it was in my case. Nevertheless, out of the wreck of all the false opinions and notions, and of the illusions that I had brought along with me, and out of the wreck of all the false impressions that I gathered early, and that experience showed me should be abandoned, one impression did not prove false. On the contrary, that one grew upon me day by day. And the more I learned of the Movement in America, the more I saw of it—and, as you may judge, my opportunities have been exceptional during these twelve years—the more I observed what happened in other countries in which the Socialist or the Labour Movement is active, all the stronger did that first impression grow upon me, and all the completer shape did it take. That impression was this: That the Socialist Republic, another way for saying the "emancipation of the working class," would never come about unless a good deal more time and thought were devoted to certain lines of



observation, of study and of activity, which I found were neglected, at least not fully appreciated.

The essence of Socialist theory, of Socialist philosophy, is simple. The combined economic law of Exchange Value, and sociologic law with regard to man's being a tool-using animal, can be put in a nutshell. And the deductions from them are obvious. The former demonstrates that the man who produces with tools that render his labour more expensive than the labour socially necessary, cannot possibly hold his own against the man who, producing with improved machinery, devotes less labour upon the production of certain goods. The latter demonstrates that the tool is the weapon of man's supremacy over Nature: master of the tool, man harnesses Nature to his service, and maintains his freedom against his fellows; without it, he is the slave of him who is equipped therewith. Coupling these two laws, the philosophy of Socialism radiates in all the luminousness instinct in simple truth; and, in its rays, the Socialist Republic rises in all its splendour, not as a mere "Haven of Refuge," but as truly a "Promised Land" to the human race, freed at last from the nightmare of class rule.

Now this theory or philosophy can be enlarged upon; broader and deeper researches may impart greater breadth and depth thereto; it may be enriched by excursions into the manifold subjects that branch off from, or are tributary to it; men of eloquence may add thrill to the presentation. That is all true; and it is well that that be done. Such a theme calls for and needs the amplest efforts of the mind. But this other is also true: that not all the efforts expended upon that line, nay, not if we were to pile up essays upon essays on those subjects mountain-high and indulge in the most marvellous refinements of science, will bring the Socialist Republic one inch nearer its realisation. Aye, on the contrary, all such noble efforts might even turn to its undoing. I say it deliberately, *turn to its undoing*, unless, hand in hand with all that, something else is attended to also. And that something else I missed, and missed from the start, and missed all along. As the ship of our Party got into deeper and deeper waters, and severer and severer gales beat against it, I had occasion to feel more and more how much time had been lost in furnishing the masses with instruction upon just that thing I have in mind; and that is, a knowledge of what I may call the *strategy* and the *tactics* of the Movement.

The words strategy and tactics have acquired in the public estimation a false meaning. They are generally identified with trickery, deception, duplicity. Now strategy and tactics may degenerate into all that; but deception, trickery, duplicity are not at all times inseparable from strategy or tactics. Take an army that, under the blazing noon-day sun, marches directly, in a straight line, upon the enemy's fortifications and storms them. There can be no duplicity there, there can be no trickery there, there cannot be there any question of cheating. Everything is done in a straight line, over and above board. And yet that army moves obedient to strategic laws, and its every motion is in rhythm with tactical principles. If it neglected either at any time, it would be destroyed.

Strategy and tactics imply simply a military knowledge of the topography of the field of action, and of the means at command. Strategy implies a military knowledge of the strength that lies in that hill, the weakness that lies in yonder hollow, to the end that the one may be

seized, the other avoided; or to the end that, if the strategically strong place is in the enemy's hand, no disastrous surprise overtake us; and if we happen to find ourselves on the strategically weak place, we may know enough to throw up entrenchments. Similarly, tactics imply a military knowledge of the strength, the weakness; the qualities, in short, of the forces under fire, to the end that we may proceed accordingly. Now the Socialist Movement may be likened to an army; and it travels over a field that may be closely compared with that over which an army advances. The Socialist Movement should, accordingly, be posted upon the military topography of the field it is operating on, and of the tactics dictated by the nature of the forces it is operating with.

The purpose of these two lectures is to supply, to a certain extent, the existing deficiency on these subjects. Of these two lectures on "Two Pages from Roman History," the second, "The Warning of the Gracchi," will cover a tactical weakness of the Socialist Movement, and thereby help to point out certain pitfalls that are to be avoided. The first lecture, "Plebs Leaders and Labour Leaders," is intended to point out a certain strategically strong post held by the enemy, the capitalist interest, and thereby draw due attention to the danger that lurks from that quarter.

With these introductory words I shall enter upon my subject.

#### PLEBS LEADERS AND LABOUR LEADERS.

Any one who glances over the Labour Movement in the English-speaking world cannot fail to be struck somehow—favourably, unfavourably, or half-and-half—by a certain apparition not known in any other Labour Movement, except in that of the English-speaking countries, namely, England, the United States, particularly, Canada, and Australia. That apparition is the Labour Leader, together with the trades organisations back of him. The question that I pose here to-night, the question that is of interest to the Socialist Movement of the English-speaking countries to answer, if it is to banish the illusions that otherwise lead to Paris Commune disasters, or cause great Movements to be switched awry, is this: What does that Labour Leader signify? What strength is there in him; and, if there is any, what is the nature thereof, and to whose interest does it accrue? In other words, what is the strategic significance of the Labour Leader on the field of the modern social question? Is it a hilltop whose strategic posture accrues to the benefit of the Labour Movement, or it is one whose strategic posture accrues to the benefit of the capitalist system?

We should profit by the experience back of the age we live in. History has not commenced with us. Other nations have preceded us. Other nations, now among the dead, also had to deal with their Social Questions. In order to understand what is going on to-day, it is as well to look at what has gone on in ages gone by, in States long since passed away; Karl Marx, in that remarkable brochure of his, "The Eighteenth Brumaire," says, that when man wants to interpret what is going on in his own day, he tries to find a parallel in the past; and that such action is like the action of a person trying to learn a new language: he always keeps on translating that language into his own, the new language being the new event, his own language being the events that lie behind him, and which, having rounded their course, can be fully understood. In order to



interpret the new language that is being spoken by modern events, let us translate it back into the well known language of now well understood past events. We shall understand the new term "Labour Leader" when we recall the career of the old term "Plebs Leader" in Roman history.

The page of Roman history to which I here turn covers about 120 years, say a hundred years. It covers the period of about 500 B.C. to about 400 A.C. It starts substantially with the chasing away of the kings. The Rome that fills our minds, our eyes and our ears; that Rome, insatiable of plunder, reckless of human life; that potent of rapine—that Rome has her formative period during the century of her life that I propose to take up with you. When the kings were chased away, all the social and political elements that later turned into the Fury we know of, were yet in ferment only. During that period of about 100 years they take shape. When that period closes, it is substantially a new social-political compound that steps upon the stage: the Rome, that, driven like a Fury from her own seething cauldron, becomes a scourge to the world, and ends by consuming herself. Let us look at these political and social elements. First at the political.

#### POLITICAL MECHANISM.

It will not be necessary to go into a minute account of the constitutional law of the Roman State. It will here suffice to designate the principal wheels of the political mechanism, and to point out their leading functions and features. In doing this I shall use modern terms, familiar to all. That will answer all practical purposes.

The wheels of the Roman political mechanism that concern us were:—

The Consuls.  
The Senate.  
The Centuries.  
The Colleges of Priests.

You may wonder how the Colleges of Priests came to have a place in the machinery of government. We will come to that.

Broadly using modern parlance, the Consuls represented the Executive, the Senate and Centuries the Legislative, the Colleges of Priests the Judicial Power.

The Consuls were two; they were elected jointly and annually by popular vote, in the Forum.

The Senate consisted theoretically of 300 members; they held office for life; vacancies were filled by the Consuls. The body partook of the character of a House of Lords, in that its legislative functions consisted mainly in passing upon measures ordered in the popular branch. The Senate sanctioned these, or refused its sanction.

The Centuries were military divisions of the people. Together, the Centuries constituted the whole people in "Committee of the Whole," gathered at the Forum. They elected the elective officers, and enacted the laws, subject to the sanction of the Senate. The singular method of voting by the Centuries is of importance to the subject in hand. I shall come back upon that later on.

Finally, the Colleges of Priests. I said they represented the Judiciary. They did in this way: If a law or an election distasteful to the ruling class was forced through; if, for any one of the thousand and one causes apt to arise wherever actual oligarchic power is draped in the drapery of democratic forms, the ruling class of Rome found it prudent to yield in Forum and Senate Hall; in such case the Colleges of Priests would conveniently discover some flaw in the auspices, some defect in the sacrifices. That annulled the election or the law, as "condemned by the gods." The fact suggests another parallel, a parallel between what happens to-day in Organised Churchdom, and what happened in Rome. The allurements are strong to branch off into that. But I shall resist it, and move on.

#### SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

Such was the political machinery of the Roman State. Now to the social aspect. What was the composition of the people who operated these four wheels of government, and who were affected by them? What I was compelled to say, in order to explain the political function of the Colleges of Priests, indicated that the Roman people was not a homogenous mass; that in Rome there was a ruling class and a ruled class. Indeed these classes were well marked.

Socialists need not be told that so long as the machinery of production is not in the hands of the people collectively there must be a ruling class and a ruled class; there must be a working class and an idle class; there must be a class that toils and does not enjoy life, and there must be a class that toils not and does the enjoying; and that the enjoying and not toiling coincides with the ruling, while the toiling and not enjoying coincides with the ruled part. Socialists need not be told that. It is of prime interest, in connection with the subject in hand, to have a distinct appreciation of the line of class-cleavage in the Roman Commonwealth.

The Roman peoples were divided into two Orders. One Order was called the Patricians, the other the Plebeians.

#### PATRICIANS.

The patricians can be easily defined. They were the clan nobility of Rome; they were the descendants of the old houses, of whom there were few in comparison to the rest of the population. Although some of the patrician houses had declined in property, the patricians were, as a whole, large property holders, both in land and money. Being a nobility, the patricians were the political rulers.

#### PLEBEIANS.

The word plebeians is harder to define, and here is where the interest of the subject begins to centre. Huxley somewhere lays to the door of Milton the unscientific conception of creation that is popular to-day. He claims that the beauty of the rhythm of a certain passage in "Paradise



Lost," and the majesty of its language, has popularised an error that civilisation has long since discarded. And so may we charge Shakespeare with being responsible for the popular misconception there is with regard to the word "plebeians." In one of Shakespeare's great tragedies, "Coriolanus," there occurs a certain passage, in fact the play almost opens with the passage. In the very first act, a crowd of rioting Roman citizens are introduced, and one of them, addressing the mob, says:—

"We are accounted poor citizens: the patricians good. What authority surfeits on, would relieve us; if they would yield us but the ale that were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear; the leanne that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is an inventory to particularise their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes: for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge."

Owing, I think, very extensively to this remarkable presentation, the popular conception of the Plebeian Order is that that element was made up of the poor, of the working men of Rome; and that conception you will find cultivated even in the school books on history. Here and there something leaks through to indicate that there were rich plebeians, but the point is never made that the term "plebeian" in Rome did not designate people effected like this plebeian that Shakespeare puts in the front of his play of "Coriolanus." The term plebeian meant in the Roman language "the multitude." It was a term used in contradistinction to the few, the patricians. In other words, it was the antithesis of oligarchy, the patricians being the few, the plebeians being the many. It was not an economic distinction.

Indeed, there was no such economic line of cleavage between patricians and plebeians. There were rich men, in land and money, among the plebeians; probably more of them than among the patricians. The difference between the two sets—patricians and rich plebeians—lay in this: a patrician who lost his property did not, therefore, lose caste; artificial social corks kept him in his patrician rank and the political attributes of his clan-nobility, with the aid of which he might attain economic power; on the contrary with the rich plebeian, the loss of his property carried with it the loss of the only power he had—economic power. So absolutely of the same economic class was a considerable portion of the Plebeian Order with the patricians, that rich plebeians and patricians shared together the spoils that their economic power conferred upon them.

#### CLASS LINES.

Again using modern parlance, the plebs, the multitude, fell into three economic classes: the "bourgeoisie" or large property-holding plebeian, the "middle class" plebeian, and the "proletarian" plebeian; this last forming the majority of all, a working class, stripped of all property and forced to hire themselves out for a living. So that, in point of economic, or class distinctions, the Roman commonwealth was divided, not between "patricians" and "plebeians," but the class line of cleavage ran between patricians and "bourgeois" plebeians, on the one hand, and "proletarian" plebeians, on the other, with a "middle class" plebs in between. Patricians and "bourgeois" plebeians, holding the economic power, or

means of exploitation, jointly wielded their power: the "proletarian" plebs were exploited, the "middle class" plebs were uprooted, very much in the way the process goes on to-day.

Now what was the means of exploitation? It was not machinery. Machinery, as we understand the thing, did not then exist. The means of exploitation bore, all the same, close resemblance with the modern means. Already then the law of exchange value was bound to affect things. The same as to-day the man who works with a large factory has a power over the man who works with a small factory, and can smoke him out, and throw him into the class of the proletariat; so likewise the man who held large farms could produce so much more plentifully, could produce with so much more economy that the middle class landholder could not hold his own and was proletarianised. It goes without saying that the power of economic tyranny that manifested itself in the uprooting of the small holders, or middle class, had a direct manifestation in the direct exploitation of the workingman, and rendered the position, at first of the agricultural and subsequently of the urban proletariat, all the harder to bear. The specific sources of the increasing economic tyranny and exploitation, which manifested themselves in the Roman State, were the following:—

#### SOURCES OF ECONOMIC TYRANNY AND EXPLOITATION.

Rome was almost always engaged in war. As a rule she won. The immediate result of the victories of Rome was the enlargement, not of the Roman territory merely, but of the estates of the large landlords. The territory of the conquered nations in Italy was partitioned among the conquerors. Theoretically, the allotments were to be equal among all. In point of fact the large landlords, patricians and bourgeois plebs, grabbed the bulk; the middle class was allowed a sop; the proletarians were left out in the cold. The larger the estates grew, all the more precarious became the existence of the middle class.

Again, after making the allotments, a portion of the conquered territory was always left undivided. It was reserved for the "public domain," a "common," so to say. On that public domain the whole people, theoretically, were allowed to graze their cattle. In point of fact, the large property-holders, patrician and bourgeois plebs, virtually appropriated these public domains for their own herds. Under the guise of usufruct, for which they paid the government a rental that was nominal, and that often was not paid at all, they kept the public domain in perpetuity, to the still greater injury of the middle class, and in some instances, even of proletarians.

Again, in the extensively commercially developed Rome, money was a staple of prime need. The patricians and bourgeois plebs were not landlords only—the "Single Tax" gets knocked out in Rome at the very start—they were also money-lenders, usurious money-lenders. The hard pushed middle class farmer readily found a patrician or bourgeois plebeian money-lender waiting to "help him out." The result was his expropriation.

Again, in the instinctive hankering of their class after the property of



the small holders, the Roman large property-holders speedily desisted in taxation a prime means to their end. In this manoeuvre the Roman large property-holders gave points to the Dutch Pensionary De Witt, points that he did not fail to take two thousand years later. The community of interest between patricians and bourgeois plebs drew them into close alliance. The patricians laid on the taxes; patricians and bourgeois plebs shifted them deftly over to the shoulders of the small holders, and thus directly urged on the wholesale sweeping away of the middle class, and reduced them to proletarians.

There was a fifth source of economic oppression, which does not manifest itself at the very start, but that grew, and grew, and became a crying evil, bearing directly upon the proletariat. It was chattel slavery. Along with the territories that Rome appropriated from the nations that she overcame, she appropriated their people too. Thus an ever-increasing horde of slaves swelled the Roman labour market, raising there a question suggestive of that of "prison-labour" to-day. The middle class had no means to invest in the slave market, or occasion to use the slave. Patricians and bourgeois plebs were the investors. Slaves in such abundance were cheaper than free labour. They were bought cheap, treated worse than cattle, worked for all they were worth, and, when exhausted, were cast off to die like dogs. The page of slavery in Rome is the darkest in the whole history of chattel slavery. The hordes of slaves threw the proletariat on the streets and highways.

Finding it hard to compete with the large landlords, owing to the smallness of their own farms and their exclusion from the public domain, compelled to yield to the large property-holders large shares of their product through the usurious rates of interest extorted from them, and staggering withal under the burden of taxation, the middle class plebeians grew desperate. In even step, their ranks swelling by the accessions of the smoked-out middle class, and their labour rendered still more valueless by the gradual substitution of slaves, the proletarian plebeians became restive.

Thus stood things at the opening of the period of Roman history under consideration—about 500 B.C. An economic struggle, a struggle for economic redress, a struggle—as this plebeian in Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" puts it—"in hunger for bread," and to ward off "being made rakes," in short, a Class Struggle, however incipient, yet well marked, was on in that Roman Commonwealth. The line of class cleavage, it should seem, showed itself distinct enough to be perceived. Was it perceived? No. Why? We shall see. And, seeing, we shall also see the dire results of the oversight.

The period under consideration is the period during which the Class Struggle within the Roman Commonwealth moves from stage to stage, until it closes its first epoch, about 400 B.C. Of course the struggle continues beyond that; that struggle cannot cease but with the abolition of class rule, which is to say, with the Co-operative State, the Socialist Republic. But during this period the Class Struggle was twisted and beaten and turned, no longer into an instrument of possible deliverance, but into a weapon for future national suicide. This period progresses through seven stages.

The rising revolt of the plebeian masses against economic tyranny and exploitation threw, of course, patricians and bourgeois plebeians together. But they were not a unit. Both had the same economic interests at stake; but they did not both stand on a par. On the one side, the patrician was clad with exclusive, aristocratic, political privileges; the bourgeois plebeian was consumed with an ambition to share such privileges. On the other side, the bourgeois plebeian, by the very reason of his hereditary rank as a plebeian, enjoyed the confidence of the plebeian middle class and proletariat, and was thereby vested with the requisite qualifications to "jolly" and cajole his "fellow plebeians." The patrician, by his very hereditary rank, was barred from such confidence, and deprived of such useful qualifications. These circumstances gave the two divisions, into which the usurping class of Rome fell, not a common cause only, but also something to barter on. And thus the keynote was struck at an early date for the policy that these two sets were thenceforth to pursue—jointly against their joint exploiters, and severally towards each other. The Plebs Leader sprang therefrom. Of course, he was a bourgeois plebeian.

The first fruit of the first rumblings of the class revolt in Rome was the appearance in the Senate of the Plebs Leader. Picked bourgeois plebeians, picked out by patrician Consuls—and picked out with an eye to what qualities you may judge—were allowed the privilege of a seat in the Senate. But there, among the august and haughty patrician Senators, the Plebs Leaders were not expected to emit a sound. The patricians argued, the patricians voted, the patricians decided. When these were through then the tellers turned to the Plebs Leaders. But they were not even then allowed to give a sign with their mouths. Their mouths had to remain shut: their opinion was expressed with their feet. If they gave a tap, it meant they approved; if they gave no tap, it meant they disapproved; and it didn't much matter either way, no more than do the dead sounds, made by the Labour Leader, picked out and placed to-day by the grace of the capitalist class in the legislative bodies of America, Canada, England or Australia, New Zealand included, where his vanity may be gratified with the hollow honours of his prototype, the Plebs Leader, dumb appendage of the Roman Senate. And this was the "first step" towards the economic redress that the middle class and proletarian plebs were demanding; this was the first "victory" of the exploited and tyrannised plebs.

Sweet words butter no parsnips. It goes without saying that the hobnobbing of the Plebs Leader with patrician aristocrats in the Senate relieved not one of the economic burdens complained of by the plebs. Wars continued, and they brought on, as before, their train of fresh allotments to the already large estates, wider public domains for the large landlords to appropriate for their own cattle and an increase of slaves to



displace free labour. The deepening penury of the middle class heightened the burden of its debt. Taxation urged on its downfall. And the whole mass pressed upon the proletariat. Demands for relief were made and pressed, but only to deaf ears. They were made louder and pressed harder. A promise was made of their being attended to after the particular war in hand should be over, and the promise was forgotten by the Senate. Finally, after another war, before disbanding, and after ineffectual parleys, the plundered plebs mass, under arms, withdrew to the Sacred Mount, threatening to build a city of their own. The Senate then yielded and entered into serious negotiations. The result was the Tribune of the Plebs.

The newly-created officers had extensive powers. The Tribune of the Plebs could checkmate the Consuls, while he himself was inviolable; he could place his seal on the public treasury and thus put a spoke into the wheels of the whole machinery of government, and so on. In other words, the Tribune of the Plebs was a powerful political office, but an office, mark you, that, seeing it had no salary attached, none but Plebs Leaders could fill. The trick was taking fuller shape. The Plebs Leaders were utilising popular economic distress to the end of conquering from the patriciate political power for themselves. The plebs masses had asked for relief from debt and for bread; instead, the Plebs Leaders gained added strength to fight their own particular battles with the patricians. And this was the second "victory" of the exploited and tyrannised plebs.

#### THE PUBLILIAN LAW.

The Tribune of the Plebs proved, of course, as barren of economic benefits to the people as the dumb participation of the Plebs Leaders in the Senate had done—as barren as the Bureau of Statistics of Labour and other such fruits of "labour legislation" do to-day. Nor did it take long for the plebs masses to make the discovery, or for the Plebs Leaders to utilise the fresh ferment. The next ferment bore the Publilian law as its fruit.

You will remember that, in describing the Centuries, I stated they were in the nature of a "lower legislative Chamber." This is the place to look at the Centuries a little closer. The Centuries were military subdivisions of the whole people. The population was distributed among the Centuries according to wealth—landed wealth. The richest citizens were placed in the First Century, the next richest in the Second, and so on. As always in such cases, the ranks were thinnest in the highest Century; the Second, where the standard of wealth was lower, contained larger numbers; and so on until the Seventh Century was reached, that of the proletariat, who were propertiless and most numerous. Again, as usually where property qualifications officially determine rank, the number of votes cast by the Centuries was not equal, least of all proportionate to the numbers in each. Altogether the Centuries polled 193 votes. But the Knights, a sort of Century that headed the list and the nominally First Century, polled together 97 votes, leaving only a minority for all the rest. The system of polling the Centuries accentuated the preponderance of the Knights and the First Century. These two voted first. If they

agreed, the others were dispensed with. Accordingly, only in the exceptional instances, when the Knights and the First Century disagreed, did the suffrage of the rest of the Centuries come into play. It followed from all this that, well represented though the Plebs Leader element was in the upper and controlling Centuries, it did not there have its hands free, and could be dominated by the patricians. It also followed that, in the exceptional instances when the upper Centuries disagreed and the proletarian plebs came into play, it had to be considered in the manipulations of the Plebs Leaders. The Plebs Leaders sought to rid themselves of both inconveniences. They accomplished their purpose through the Publilian law, which they compelled the Senate to sanction in the midst of a violent popular cry for bread and the reduction of debts.

And what was the Publilian law? It was a law that vested in councils of plebeian landlords the right to initiate laws, thus conferring upon these councils co-ordinate powers with those enjoyed by the Centuries. In this way the Plebs Leaders freed themselves at one stroke both from dependence upon the patricians and from compulsion to consider the proletariat in the initiation of laws; a bold stroke for equality upward and for tyranny downward—the third "victory" of the tyrannised and exploited plebs.

#### THE DECENVIRATE.

Within twenty years of the firing of the shot just described, conditions were ripe for another. Indeed, conditions had never changed: there was only a temporary lull of the storm while waiting for the "beneficent" results of the latest "victory" to materialise. These failed to; and the Plebs Leader element, meeting with annoying resistance from the patriciate to the Plebs Leaders' encroachments on their privileges, needed but to give the signal for the storm to be again unchained. The signal was, accordingly, given, and the storm broke loose afresh. In this storm the previous magistrates went down. Consuls, Tribune of the Plebs and Plebeian Councils—all were swept away, and a "Decemvirate," rule of Ten Men, was established in their stead. It was as if the Plebs Leaders, tired of effort along the beaten paths of the old methods of procedure dictated by the old institutions, resolved upon a "shuffling of the cards," so to speak, or a "new throw of the dice," as a quicker means to reach their private aims. In a manner they succeeded. For the first time in the history of Rome Plebs Leaders appeared in the magistracy, clothed with powers equal to those held by their patrician colleagues. Among the ten men elected to the Decemvirate, two were Plebs Leaders. But no sooner was the victory won than its hollowness was discovered. Not only did the patrician majority lord it over their plebeian colleagues, but it also took occasion to emphasise its rank-superiority.

An unwritten law forbade the intermarriage of patricians with plebeians. The patrician majority on the Decemvirate, no doubt feeling the flood of bourgeois invasion threatening the clan supremacy of the patriciate, decided to throw up dikes. This it did by putting into written law the bar between patrician and plebeian marriage. This act sealed the doom of the Decemvirate. The burning economic questions having been, just as before, left wholly untouched, it took no great effort to re-arouse the



plebeian masses into revolt, with the result that down went the Decemvirate.

#### VALERIO-HORATION LAW.

This stage, in the period under discussion, is marked by the Valerio-Horatio law which restored the previous wheels of the government machinery, the Tribune of the Plebs included, and enlarged their authority, but still, as before, left untouched the economic abuses complained of by the very masses used to gain these political privileges for the Plebs Leaders. And thus further "victories" were recorded for the distressed plebs, and were declaimed about from the stump in the Forum to the enchanted plebs multitude, much as in our own days, the Labour Leader, who, by means of strikes and other devices, is laying up treasures, not in heaven, but on earth, is seen to expatiate upon his vast achievements in behalf of the starving crowd of workmen, who listen to him open mouthed.

#### CANULEIAN LAW.

The Valerio-Horatio law was strictly an interlude, a preparatory step. The Plebs Leader element was stung to the quick by the statute on marriages, and it was impatient for full equality in political privileges. A bitter fight was soon started with the abolition of marital restrictions and access to the Consulship as the silent objects in view, the matters declaimed about being those that arose from the wrongful allotments, the extortions of the usurers, the vexations that the proletariat were subjected to. The patricians resisted with stubborn tenacity. A compromise was the result; and that was embodied in the Canuleian law.

The patriciate yielded the point on marriages, but it shuffled on the Consulship. The Consuls were abolished. In their stead "Military Tribunes with Consular power" were set up. What that meant the Plebs Leaders were not yet fully aware of. They believed they had gained their point in both respects; and when the Canuleian law was enacted they called off their "dogs of war," the plebs. And this was the sixth "victory" of the exploited and tyrannised plebs. With the economic distress of these as a weapon, the Plebs Leader element, that itself produced and profited by such conditions, gained the point of qualifying for Consular powers, and also the privilege of selling their daughters to scions of patrician houses. The plebs mass demanded bread: to the orchestration of this mournful dirge, the Plebs Leader qualified for fathers-in-law of patrician youths; not unlike the Labour Leaders of to-day, who, to the orchestration of a declining wage and deepening misery among the Working Class, qualify for guests fit "to place their legs under the mahogany," at banquets given by the capitalist exploiters.

#### CASSIUS AND MANLIUS.

Between the Canuleian law and the next and closing stage—the Lucian Law—the longest span of years occurred of any that divided the

previous stages of this epoch of Roman history. The contending forces gathered during this interval their whole strength for a last and decisive effort. And the lines were exactly those along which the conflict was waged hitherto. Two incidents during these first fifty years contribute not a little to underscore the significance of events.

Only twice since the struggle started were there concrete propositions made looking to the relief of economic distress, and toward removing the causes thereof. In other words, only twice were propositions brought forward in lines with issues that were raised by the Plebs Leaders. Both propositions proceeded from patricians. And in both instances the noble movers of the motions were immolated upon the altar of the Plebs Leader element, this element distancing the patriciate in its ferocity to "save the Republic"—just as the Labour Leader of our own days distances the capitalist class in the deep malignity of his hatred of the Socialist.

The first instance was that of Spurius Cassius. Cassius was no ordinary patrician. With him achievements did not lag behind birth. Often had he led the Roman legions to victory; vast were the domains his powers had added to the territory of the Commonwealth, and twice, the spoils of war carried before, he rode at the head of his army in triumphal march through the streets of Rome to give thanks to the Capitoline Jupiter—no ordinary share of Roman distinction. Cassius perceived that not one of the laws scored by the Plebs Leaders at all touched the cause of the evil. The evil had to be attacked at its root. Despite his patrician economic interests, he proposed a law to re-allot the land, and make provision to prevent the re-occurrence of the disparity of wealth, which, he foresaw, was driving Rome to the brink of ruin. Class interests asserted themselves. In solid mass, the patricians and Plebs Leaders arose against the daring innovator. Cassius and his proposed law went down, drowned in his blood.

The second instance was even more tragically dramatic. The Celt invasion of Italy had carried everything before it, and virtually swamped Rome herself. The inhabitants had fled to the burghs to the south and east. The Celts camped in the streets of Rome. Only one spot in the city had remained free from the desecration of the invader. That was the Capitoline Hill. There a patrician, Marcus Manlius, entrenched himself with a few other brave companions, resisted all attempts to scale the hill, and held out till the Celtic marauders, tired out and disheartened by such persistence, fell back—never again to reappear before the walls of Rome, except as captives of war.

Manlius, surnamed Capitolinus from that act of successful daring, seeing one day one of the soldiers who had fought with him dragged to prison for debt, stopped the tip-staves, emptied his purse in the interest of the afflicted plebeian, and declared that so long as he had a farthing no Roman should suffer want. His attitude and proposals flew in the face of the property-holding class. Again Plebs Leaders vied with the patriciate in "patriotism" and "respect for the laws of the land." Manlius was seized and thrown headlong down the Tarpeian Rock—whence the proverb, "There is but a step from the Capitoline Hill to the Tarpeian Rock," from glory to martyrdom.



During the fifty years that elapsed between the passing of the Canuleian law and the Licinian law, Rome made the greatest progress hitherto made in the expansion of her territory. Wars were numerous, successful; and the spoils were in proportion. It needs no argument to show that all that merely furnished the Plebs Leader element with vaster material to work on. Indeed, the terror of being proletarianised never before weighed heavier upon the minds of the middle class, nor had the distress of the proletariat ever before reached such a pitch. The Plebs Leader element fructified the economic distress to the utmost, and, after considerable sparring, framed the Licinian law, and fought it through to a successful finish.

The Licinian law may be termed a platform with six planks:—

1. Restoration of the Consulships.
2. At least one of the two Consuls to be a plebeian.
3. Admission of plebeians to the Colleges of Priests.
4. Limitation of the number of cattle and sheep to be allowed on the commons, as well as the quantity of additional allotments to be allowed to individual holders.
5. The number of free labourers to be proportionate to that of slaves employed on each farm.
6. Alleviation of debtors.

It will be noticed that the first three planks are political, the last three are economic demands. The first three could be enforced immediately upon the enactment of the law, the last three required supplementary legislation. It will also be noticed that the first three cut at the very root of the existing political inequality between patricians and plebeians. Upon the enactment of the Licinian law the Plebs Leader would have supplemented his economic power with the political privileges requisite to safeguard it, and henceforth he could enjoy with the patriciate the double power of economic exploitation and political usurpation, including the useful privilege of, whenever convenient, discovering "flaws in the auspices" and "defects in sacrifices." On the other hand, the three economic planks, even if enforced, could, by that time, do hardly more than afford temporary relief, and that to some few only. They left class economic inequality untouched and thereby the power of exploitation unclipt.

The patricians did not fail to perceive all this. They also knew it was "now or never" with them. And they made ready for their last stand. The struggle is said to have lasted eleven years. More than once in this interval did the patricians offer to grant the last three planks, the economic demands. But the Plebs Leaders resisted—exactly as the Labour Leader of to-day, who rejects the employer's offer to accept the economic demands made by the men, unless also "the Union is recognised," that is, unless the Labour Leader's status is maintained. The Plebs Leader refused to "settle," unless settlement was made with him. At last, a new migration to the Sacred Mount being threatened, the patriciate surrendered. The Plebs Leaders had won out to the fullest. And this was the last and crowning "victory" of the series won by the exploited and oppressed plebs.

The Licinian law closes this epoch, and I might here close the sketch of it. But there is still one more event to record. The seven stages just touched on are like beads on a string. The string has a knot. And the knot is worth all the beads put together. It summarises the set. Upon the final passing of the Licinian law, a distinguished Roman patrician, Camillus by name, the Mark Hanna of the Rome of that day—not that the vulgar Jerry Sneak of the bourgeois, Mark Hanna, could compare, either in point of breeding or of culture, with that distinguished patrician; nevertheless, a Mark Hanna in the sense that Camillus was then, as Mark Hanna is to-day, the type of the economic and political usurping class—Camillus, then, in order to celebrate the event, built a temple at the foot of the Capitol, and dedicated it to the Goddess of Concord. Looked at closely, one cannot help but be startled at the close lines of resemblance between Camillus's Temple to the Goddess of Concord and a certain creation of our own days, Hanna's Civic Federation Commission of Industrial Peace.

The Temple to the Goddess of Concord was meant for a monument to commemorate the end of internal discord. Did the Temple of Camillus commemorate a fact? Was discord at an end? Did the Licinian law dry up the sources of the discontent that had been gathering during the preceding hundred years? Was crass economic inequality, with its resultant evils, dealt the blow that ended it, or were at least measures taken for its extinction? Giving the Licinian law time to operate, and looking 200 years forward, we find that the census of Italy—Rome having meantime conquered the whole of Italy—showed in all Italy not two thousand families of solid wealth! Looking forward 100 years further, we find Tiberius Gracchus, in Plutarch's life of that Roman, giving the following bird's-eye view of his country:—

"The wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing left but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitations, they wander from place to place with their wives and children; and their generals do but mock them, when, at the head of their armies, they exhort their men to fight for their sepulchres and domestic gods; for, among such numbers, perhaps there is not a Roman who has an altar that belonged to his ancestors, or a sepulchre in which their ashes rest. The private soldiers fight and die, to advance the wealth and luxury of the great; and they are called masters of the world, while they have not a foot of ground in their possession."

Indeed, there was no concord, and none, properly speaking, could be. The Licinian law neither cauterised the evil, nor even placed a salve upon it. The slight economic improvements it promised were hardly attended to. On the other hand, the vaster wars that Rome undertook brought vaster property into the hands of the already overpowering ruling class. The expropriation of the small holders went on apace. The usurer held high carnival. Slaves deluged the free proletariat. All the evils complained of at the start were there, only in a form infinitely more aggravated. Was then the Temple to the Goddess of Concord a lie, robust and unqualified? No.

The Temple to the Goddess of Concord *did* record a truth. There *was* concord, but among whom?

The only true warring factions had been patricians and Plebs Leaders; the participation of the plebs masses being only in the nature of food for cannon. The Plebs Leader element craved political power. It did



organisation against organisation, and he who says "organisation" says "leadership." A cursory view reveals the capitalist leader at the head of one column; at the head of the other column there has long figured the Labour Leader, the leader in the Trades Unions. The significance of the Plebs Leader was disclosed by his acts and the effect thereof. Let his own acts also speak for the Labour Leader. These acts, illumined by the career of the Plebs Leaders, will cause the strategic significance of the modern specimen to stand in no doubtful light.

#### LABOUR LEADER RECORD.

I have a mass of documents upon the subject. It will be impossible to go through all of them. I shall take from this mass mainly the facts furnished by the Labour Leader in political office. In many cases, facts as striking are furnished by the Labour Leader outside of public office—the same as Plebs Leaders out of office rendered material aid to their confreres in office. I shall even omit many that come under the category of the official political conduct of the Labour Leader. Voluminous as are the documents I have so far gathered, the collection is far from complete. A pamphlet on the record, even only the official political record, of the Labour Leader will be found to be an invaluable contribution to the arsenal of the Labour Movement.

The first document I wish to quote from is the answer of Comrade J. A. Leach of Phoenix, Ariz., to my inquiry touching the Labour Leaders in public office in his Territory. He says:—

"There are no Trade Unionists holding office in Arizona, that I know of, either elective or appointative. They tried to get an eight-hour law passed in last Legislature, making it illegal to work the miners over eight hours per day. But when the bill was under discussion in the House, it was there held up to ridicule, and referred to as likely to have a bad effect on the miners, and cause them to become gouty. The miners of the town of Globe were so dissatisfied with the conduct of the Representative of their county in the Legislature, that the first time he came to town, they seized him, put him on a rail, rode him out of town, and ordered him not to return, or they would give him another dose of rail-riding."

This gives the key to the situation; it gives an inkling of what the Capitalist Class would have to expect if it endeavoured, of and by itself, to rivet the chains of exploitation upon the Working Class; it also points the Capitalist Class quite clearly to the policy to pursue; to wit avail itself of what strategic position there may be to enable it to mask its moves. Did the Capitalist Class take the hint given it by its early experience?

#### LENDING A COLOUR OF LABOUR TO CAPITALISM.

The profits of the Capitalist Class represent wages withheld from the Working Class. The fleecing of Labour, implied in the raking in of profits, is predicated upon the existence of a wage-slave class, a Working Class, in short, a proletariat; and the continuance of the existence of such a class is in turn dependent upon the private ownership of the means of production—of the land on and the machinery, capital, with which to

work. Given the private ownership of these combined elements of production, and the Capitalist Class will congest ever more into its own hands the wealth of the land, while the Working Class must sink to ever deeper depths of poverty and dependence, every mechanical improvement only giving fresh impetus to the exaltation of the capitalist and to the degradation of the workingman. The issue between the two classes is one of life and death; there are no two sides to it; there is no compromise possible. Obviously, it is in the interest of the Working Class that the issue be made and kept clear before the eyes of the rank and file, and that capitalism be held up to their view in all its revolting hideousness. What does the Labour Leader do? He lends to the monster that preys upon the workers the colour of Labour by his sanction of its methods.

As leading instances of renderers of this service to the Capitalist Class may be quoted, among many others of less note, Henry Broadhurst, William Abrahams, and Richard Bell in the British Parliament, and, in America, Robert Howard, late of the Massachusetts Legislature.

Member of Parliament Broadhurst is a member of the Stonemasons' Union. At the same time he is a large holder of shares in the Brunner-Mands Chemical Works in England, where 50 per cent. profit is made under conditions of fearful slavery.

Member of Parliament Abrahams is a member of the Miners' Union. At the same time he is a director of the London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow Assurance Company and of the Calais Tramway, on the latter of which, especially, the unpaid labour of the employees are "directed" into the pockets of the shareholders, this M.P. among the lot.

Member of Parliament Bell is Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. During the Taff Vale Railway Dispute he was complimented by the Board of Trades representative as a "labour organiser who was capable of seeing that a question had two sides."

Howard, who had strenuously upheld the Capitalist System in the Massachusetts Legislature, was of the Fall River, Mass., Spinners' Union. When his mind recently failed him, and his property had to be administered, he was found to be worth 100,000 dollars, a large part of it in stocks in the very mills in which were fleeced to the skin the spinners of whose organisation he was an officer.

Nor should omission be made under this head, especially not at this season when the electric motor is throwing the locomotive engineers on their beam ends, of P. M. Arthur, Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. While Capitalism was slaughtering his union men on the roads, and was getting ready to reduce them to unskilled labour, he, though not holding political office, pulled the wool over their eyes and filled his pockets with railroad stock from which he derived large dividends, yielded by the members of his union.

#### NURSING ANTI-LABOUR DELUSIONS.

The Capitalist Class knows no country and no race, and any "God" suits it so that "God" approve of the exploitation of the worker. Despite all seeming wranglings, sometimes even wars, among them, the Capitalist Class is international, and presents a united front against the Working Class. But for that very reason the Capitalist Class is inter-



ested in keeping the workingmen divided among themselves. Hence it foments race and religious animosities that come down from the past.

Again, the earnings of the Working Class decline. This is due to the ever larger supply of labour relative to the demand. The Capitalist Class knows that what brings on the increased supply is not immigration so much, but the improved and ever improving machinery, held as private property. For every immigrant by whom the labour market is overstocked, it is overstocked by ten workingmen in the country whom privately owned machinery displaces. The Capitalist Class is full well aware that if this fact be known the conclusion would leap to sight; to wit, that the solution of the Labour Problem is simply the public ownership of the machine. If fifty men, working ten hours a day, can, with improved machinery, produce as much as one hundred did before without such improved machinery, the publicly owned machine would not, as the privately owned machine does, throw out fifty men; it would throw out *five* of the former ten hours of work. It is as clear as day to the Capitalist Class that it must raise dust over this fact so as to conceal it; and no better means to this end is offered than the fomenting of the plausible delusion that the evil lies in immigration. Anti-immigration laws are the fruit of these two purposes. Such laws kill two flies with one slap; they draw attention away from the nerve that aches, and simultaneously they help to set the workers of the land in racial and creed hostility against the newcomers, who, of course, the Capitalist Class itself sees to shall not be lacking. Obviously, it is in the interests of the Working Class that this brace of fatal delusions be dispelled from their minds. What does the Labour Leader do? He helps nurse both delusions.

It is no accident that the Edward F. McSweeney of the Shoemakers' Union, the McKims of the Carpenters', the T. V. Powderlys of Knights of Labour antecedents, and now a Frank P. Sargeant, Grand Master of the Locomotive Firemen, are the ones picked out by the Capitalist Presidents, and are found ready to fill the places in the Department of the Commissioner of Immigration.

#### LENDING A COLOUR OF LABOUR TO CAPITALIST MEASURES.

Capitalism demands ever larger profits. Upon the volume of its profits depends the power of the Capitalist Class to dominate the Working Class. It follows that capitalism requires an ever intenser exploitation of the adult worker; that it hungers after the marrow of the children of the Working Class as one of the most efficient means for the lowering of wages and earnings; that it seeks to keep these in the ignorance and illiteracy "befitting the station that God has assigned them to in life;" that it aims at preparing the field in such way as to leave the Working Class at the greatest possible disadvantage whenever it rises in the revolt implied in the strike; and that, while thus seeking to augment its profits, it strains to reduce its taxes, those slices taken from its profits. Obviously, it is in the interest of the Working Class that a spoke be put into each of these wheels. What does the Labour Leader do? He lends the colour of labour to these capitalist manoeuvres.

As instances of this particular service to the Capitalist Class may be

quoted, among a great many others, the conduct of John Wilson, Fenwick, and Thomas Burt in the British Parliament; of Henry Blackmore and Clarence Connolly, Labour Commissioner and Factory Inspector respectively, in Missouri; of Stephen Charters in the mayoralty office of Ansonia, Conn.; of Sam Ross in the Massachusetts Legislature; of J. J. Kinney, E. J. Bracken and James L. Cannon in the Ohio Legislature, and of Samuel Prince and William Maher in the New York Legislature.

In Northumberland and Durham, England, the miners only work six hours per day, but their children, who act as drawers of coal, and are *paid by the men*, work ten hours, one set of children serving two sets of men. Fenwick and Wilson, both of the Miners' Union, are members of Parliament from those two counties; and both of them, together with Thomas Burt, member for Morpeth, and also of the Miners' Union, oppose tooth and nail all propositions for the legal eight-hour day. On the last occasion, when the bill was up, March 5 of this year, Wilson, in voting against it, said "he regretted that Mr Burt, who took the same line as he did in the matter, was not present; when he found himself on the same side with Mr Burt, he felt he was on the side of the angels."

Accidents to children in the factories of Missouri have become shockingly frequent. The law provides for fire-escapes and forbids the employment of children under fourteen years. These laws are coolly ignored and no prosecutions are instituted. Blackmore of the St Louis Carpenters and of the Building Trades Council is the Labour Commissioner, and Connolly of the St Louis International Typographical Union is the Factory Inspector under whose shield these crimes on Labour are permitted and committed.

Under the auspices of Charters, the Carpenters' Union Mayor of Ansonia, a proposition was introduced this spring to retrench on the school appropriations, so as to lower taxation. Thus, besides saving for the capitalists of Ansonia the profits that would otherwise have to go to the school tax, the Charters proposition amounted to cutting off fully two years from the educational opportunities of the children of the Working Class, and thereby and additionally hurl these young ones into the factories to compete with and lower the wages of the workers.

A favourite capitalist flank move to increase the exploitation of his hands, where he cannot reduce wages outright, is the "fines system." Under the name of "fines" enough can be whacked out of the workers' wages to very materially increase the plunder in the capitalist's pockets. The practice was threatening a revolt among the weavers of New Bedford, Mass. Thereupon the secretary of their Union, Ross, is picked out by the capitalists to run for the Legislature on one of the capitalist tickets, on the express issue of legislating the "fines system" out of existence. Ross was elected, and an anti-fines law passed. Nevertheless, the "fines system" continued in full blast; an aggrieved weaver hauled one of the violators of the law before the Court; the Court pronounced the law "unconstitutional"—and Ross continued in the Legislature, where he neither moved the impeachment of the Judge, nor any new anti-fines bill, and by his sepulchral dumbness gave the sanction of Labour to such a capitalist iniquity.

Conscious of the fact that, despite all the drag that the Labour Leader is on the impulses of Labour, the workingmen periodically take the bit



into their own mouth, the Capitalist Class is intent upon so arranging things beforehand that when the workingman goes on strike he may find himself "in a hole, with the wind blowing upon him from all sides." One of the many devices to this end is the enactment of laws clothing street railway employees with police powers. Such powers do not add inches to the workingman in behalf of his class; on the contrary. A strike being on, these employees fall under the command of Chiefs of Police, and can be handled with effect. A bill to this effect came up in the Ohio Legislature only the other day, and it passed with the support of the following Labour Leader members: Kinney, ex-International Secretary of the Metal Polishers' Union and Business Agent of the Cleveland Local; Bracken, ex-National Secretary of the Lathers' Union of Columbus and Secretary when elected, and Cannon, of the International Cigarmakers' Union of Columbus. Parenthetically it is of no slight interest to note here that when, in 1899, a corrupt conspiracy now well known in the annals of the American Labour Movement as the "Kangaroo Conspiracy" broke out against the Socialist Movement, and an attempt was made by the Cleveland wing of the conspirators to pack a certain meeting of the Cleveland Section of the Socialist Labour Party, so as to cause the Section to kangaroo; the above named J. J. Kinney was on deck; paid up two years' back dues, and, though vainly, yet strenuously, sought to scuttle the Section. Other devices looking to the placing of the workers in a helpless hole during strikes are "Tramp Laws," so-called, whereby a workingman on strike can be adjudged a "tramp" and sent to work in the identical factory against which he struck; "Military Codes" vesting the Courts with power to call out the militia, etc., etc. Such conspiracies against the Working Class have been enacted into law in this State of New York, and they received the support of Prince of the International Cigarmakers' Union, and Maher of the Cabdrivers' Union, both members of the Legislature.

#### CONCEALING DISREGARD OF THE WORKERS' SAFETY.

It is not merely by the process of sponging up the wealth produced by the Working Class that the Capitalist Class undermines the health and life of the workingman. The Capitalist Class is, not constructively or inferentially only, a cannibal class. The roots of capitalism are literally watered with the blood of the proletariat. The fields of production—mills, shops, railroad beds, yards—are strewn with the limbs and fallen bodies of workingmen. Capitalist "progress" is built upon the skulls and crossbones of its Working Class victims. Obviously, in the interest of the Working Class is the tearing of the veil of hypocrisy with which the Capitalist Class seeks to conceal these deeds of maimed and murder, and the giving to them the greatest publicity possible. What does the Labour Leader do? He aids in the act of concealment, and thereby lends direct support to the capitalist's reckless disregard for the safety of the workingman's limb and life. Of this particular service to capitalism, the following few instances, taken from an inexhaustible quarry, may give an idea.

In Silver Bow County, Mont., Sam Johnson, the Secretary of the Mill Smelters' Union, is Coroner, and Peter Breen, of the Miners' Union, is County Attorney. "Accidents," by which miners and smelters are injured for life or killed, due entirely to capitalist reckless methods, are matters

of daily occurrence in the County. Johnson has been in office now seventeen months. Aided by Breen, not one—aye, not one—case has been prosecuted; they are all hushed up.

Here in this State the cry went up, it was eleven years ago, on the outrages perpetrated by the Adirondack Railroad Company, Vanderbilt System, upon the men who were shanghaied to build the road. Florence F. Donovan, of the International Typographical Union, at the time a Commissioner of Arbitration, was appointed to investigate. He was shown to have been bribed by the Company with 500 dollars to whitewash it; and he earned his bribe; and though he went down and out of office in disgrace, the Company went off scot free!

In the State of Washington, when the Great Northern Tunnel, called the "Cascade Tunnel," owing to its heavy grade and length, was first opened, three or four workmen were suffocated to death, owing to the company's hurry to operate the road. The State Legislature appointed a committee to investigate. William Blackman, a member of the Seattle Typographical Union, and, at the time, Labour Commissioner, was put on the committee to "represent labour." The committee reported unanimously the tunnel perfectly safe, and none responsible for the accident.

And in Pennsylvania. The Mine and Factory Inspectors in that bloodstained region, a region shaken up periodically by shocking "accidents" to miners, are Labour Leaders almost to a man. I shall not cumulate instances on this head. You know that the maimed and murdered miners go unavenged, the crimes being screened by those Labour Leaders.

#### GIVING A COLOUR OF LABOUR TO CAPITALIST BRUTALITY,

And yet, not all this will stead the Capitalist Class. And they know it. As a last and most effective string to their bow, when all other means fail, the Capitalist Class thrums on the public powers that it is entrusted with. If, despite all their efforts at suppression and misleading, cajoling and cheating, the indignation of the Working Class breaks loose, the policeman's club, the rifle of the militia, and, if necessary, the military power of the Nation itself, are brought into requisition. What deception, cajolements and chicanery may have failed to accomplish, brute force is ordered to bring about, and the workmen are clubbed or butchered into subjection. Obviously in the interest of the Working Class is, at least, emphatic protest against such deeds. What does the Labour Leader do? From his safe perch in office he condones by his silence the brutality of capitalism, occasionally even applauds it.

A few instances in which this particular service is rendered to the Capitalist Class are these:—

John Burns, Labour Leader in the British Parliament, when the miners were shot down by the troops in 1893 at Featherstone, and the Liberal Home Secretary Asquith "took upon himself the responsibility of the act"—John Burns upheld the hand of Mr Asquith.

Dave C. Coates, President of the State Federation of Labour of Colorado, as Lieutenant Governor of that State, remains silent at the periodical clubbings and shootings of workmen in his State, and by his conduct accentuates the meaning of his taking the stump for Charles



S. Thomas, who, in 1898, was rewarded by the Colorado capitalists with the nomination for Governor in return for his denunciation of the miners of the Bull Hill district as "thugs and incendiaries."

In New York, the Sam Prince and William Maher, already mentioned, and before them Williams of the Carpenters' Union, sat quietly in their seats in the Legislature while Governors Flower, Morton, and the present incumbent Odell successively hurled the militia of the State against the railway workers in Buffalo, Brooklyn and Albany, striking to enforce the ten-hour law, and in support of the capitalists who were violating the law. Vested as they were with the power to move the impeachment of these law-breaking magistrates, the silence of that batch of Labour Leaders was an emphatic expression of approval. Nor should it escape us in this connection that, fresh upon Governor Flower's conduct, and the applause bestowed upon him by his supporter and fellow-Democrat, Jacob Cantor, this Cantor becoming a candidate for the Senate, he was pronounced a "friend of Labour," and he who said the contrary "one who said what is not true," by another Labour Leader, Samuel Gompers.

In St Paul, Minn., one B. F. Morgan, a member of Lodge 31 of the Switchmen's Union, enjoys a place on the police force of the city, and despite—or is it, perhaps, because of—this double capacity, appeared as a delegate at the recent Milwaukee, Wis., national convention of his trade. What virtues qualified that Labour Leader for selection as policeman by the capitalist government of St Paul you may judge. You may also judge what influences secured his election to the convention, and what his mission was there.

In Detroit, Mich., one C. P. Collins had earned his spurs with the Capitalist Class for shooting down the city employees at Conners Creek. Wishing after that to run for Sheriff, and his capitalist backers fearing that his Conners Creek record would militate against him with the workingmen voters, his backers hired Henry Eickoff of the Detroit Polishers' Union to impart to Collins a "Labour flavour." Collins was elected, and his capitalist backers rewarded Eickoff with the office of Factory Inspector.

#### BREAKING OFF THE HEAD OF LABOUR'S LANCE.

Obviously, independent, class-conscious political action is the head of Labour's lance. Useful as any other weapon may be, that weapon is the determining factor. Entrenched in the public powers, the Capitalist Class command the field. None but the political weapon can dislodge the usurpers and enthrone the Working Class; that is to say, emancipate the workers and rear the Socialist Republic. And none are better aware of the fact than the Capitalist Class, nor, consequently, more anxious to have the Labour forces turned from the field of independent Labour political action. Obviously, in the interest of the Working Class is it to arouse them to class-conscious political activity. What does the Labour Leader do? From England, westward over the United States and Canada to Australia, we find the Labour Leaders solidly arrayed against the very idea. A veritable bulwark of capitalism, they seek to turn the political trend of the Labour Movement into the channels of capitalist politics, where the head of Labour's lance, its independent, class-conscious political effort, can be safely broken off.

Such are the facts thrown up by the career of the Labour Leader everywhere, every one of whom, in public office, is there by the grace of capitalist parties. Even in the instances that would seem exceptional, the exception is in seeming only. As far, then, as this goes, the parallel between the Labour Leader and the Plebs Leader is accurate:

Just as with the Plebs Leader, the Labour Leader is "practical," he makes a boast of that; he nurses no "visions," he "chases no rainbows."

Just as with the Plebs Leader, the Labour Leader sees no way out of the existing Social System. He will admit the evils of capitalism; it is profitable that he should; but no more than did the Plebs Leader of old, does the Labour Leader of to-day aim at the extinction of the flames that devour the wage-slave class.

Just as with the Plebs Leader, the Labour Leader accepts the social economy of the ruling class: "Poverty always was; poverty always will be."

Just as the Plebs Leader looked down upon the plebeian proletariat and middle class as a hopeless, helpless element, fit only to be used, and brought his religion to sanction the exploitation of these classes, the Labour Leader places no faith whatever in the capacity of the Working Class to emancipate itself.

Finally, and by reason of all this, just as the Plebs Leader sought to secure *himself* against plebs distress, and, in doing so, propped up both the economic power and the political privileges of patricianism at the expense of the plebs masses, the Labour Leader of to-day limits his aspirations to the feathering of his own nest, and, in pursuit of this purpose, turns himself, at the expense of the Working Class, into a prop of capitalism.

There remains just one feature to consider, and that the most significant of all, in the physiognomy of the Plebs Leader—the circumstance that placed in the Plebs Leader's hands the means to carry out his designs. That circumstance, it will be remembered, was his sharing the designation of "plebeian." That designation raised the delusion of "community of interests" between him and the plebeian middle class and proletariat; it secured for him the confidence of these; it placed in his hands the club that we saw him swing over the head of the patriciate, and with the aid of which he wrenched from the patriciate the privileges he needed to safeguard himself against the hell of plebsism. This feature was the determining factor in the physiognomy of the Plebs Leader. It was the feature that constituted him into the strategic force that buttressed patricianism, and, consequently, could and did operate with deadly effect upon the victimised masses. How, on this point, stands the case with the Labour Leader? Exactly the same.

The common designation of "Labour" that clings to the Labour Leader, and which he is zealous to cultivate, does for the Labour Leader what the common designation of "plebeian" did for the Plebs Leader: it covers him, along with the toiling and fleeced wage-slaves in the shops, mills and yards, placing him before these in the light of a "fellow-workingman." In this instance, as in that of the Plebs Leader, the people—capitalists as well as proletarians—generally fall victims to the delusion, a delusion that, just as in the instance of the Plebs Leader,



the Labour Leader alone remains free from. Accordingly, in this instance, as in that of the Plebs Leader, the common delusion arms the Labour Leader with the club wherewith to wrench from the Capitalist Class safety for himself.

True enough, the character of that safety differs markedly from that which the Plebs Leader needed, aimed at and got. Theoretical political equality in capitalist society, especially in a capitalist republic, eliminates the political issues that arose in patrician Rome. To-day the only question among the elements that accept the existing Social System is economic. And that question is considered solved by the folks of the "practical" brigade when a "living" is secured: that is to say, when *immunity is gained from work as a wage-slave*. Obviously, the landing on the "stairs of safety" with the Labour Leader is far below what it necessarily had to be with the Plebs Leader; with the Labour Leader the landing is brought down to the level of the "bribe." The lowering of the character of the "safety" with which the Labour Leader is satisfied, quite in keeping with the lowering morality of capitalist atmosphere, does not affect the essence of the Labour Leader's exploit, nor the nature of its effect. That he can secure such safety; that he is enveloped in a popular delusion which enables him to secure such safety, and that imparts direction to would-be imitators; finally, that, bundle of ignorance, perverseness and corruption as he is, he succeeds in his double game of double dealing—that is the important fact. And that fact makes the Labour Leader of to-day, just as the Plebs Leader of old, a masked position, a strategic post and force that buttresses capitalism, and the very quality of which cannot but operate demoralisingly, disastrously upon the Working Class.

And this strategic power for evil on the part of the Labour Leader has so far been effective. With increasing rafts of them in public office by the grace of capitalist parties, and still larger rafts of them qualifying for the distinction, we see to-day that, despite an increasing percentage of workingmen, even the census admits a decreasing percentage in wages. And the general situation of the Working Class in the land to-day is well pictured by the now common grim joke: "When a workingman has reached forty-five, take him out and shoot him; he is too used up to be of any further account, and is too poor to take care of himself." And yet, despite these facts, there are those who say: "The Labour Leader amounts to nothing, ignore him"—which goes to prove that the ostriches are not all of the feathered tribe. And others there are who declare: "The Labour Leader and his organisations need not concern the Socialist Movement, capitalism itself is destroying both"—which goes to show how wide of the mark abstract scientific principles, when recited by rote, will fall!

#### THE DUTY OF THE HOUR.

The Socialist knows that popular well-being implies the emancipation of the race from class rule, and he knows that such was not possible at the time the Licinian law was being struggled for—400 B.C. The abolition of class rule had to await the modern machinery of production. Not until mechanical perfection in production can render the production of wealth ample and easy enough to afford to all the leisure that civilisation craves, does it become at all possible to abolish involuntary poverty.

The Socialist knows all that, and, knowing it, does not suppose that in 400 B.C. ought could have been done to remove the causes at the root of popular suffering. But this other he knows also, that even if the effects could not then be wholly wiped out, neither was their aggravation inevitable, and that their aggravation was the result of fortuitous circumstances. Those fortuitous circumstances were the Plebs Leader, together with the superstitions in his favour that he was able to exploit. In the Plebs Leader there was a strategic post of incalculable strength for usurpation, and of consequent weakness for the revolutionary class, the Roman proletariat. The fact having escaped the revolutionary elements of Rome, they, and the whole Commonwealth with them, suffered the full consequences. The net result of these combined causes—deepening poverty among increasing numbers; increased power of usurpation in an oligarchy; and, as the hoop to hold these staves together, the delusion born of the term "plebeian," that fastened the oppressed in blind attachment to the oppressor,—the net result, I say, of these combined causes was one that neither side looked for, but was forced upon both: it was the transmuting of the Roman people into a professional army of freebooters; the revolutionary pulse was turned into the channels of rapine, a development that, having satiated itself with plunder abroad, finally turned, as I indicated at the start, into a weapon, not for national comfort, but of national suicide.

That the revolutionary elements of Rome should have slipped and fallen is pardonable. Not so with the revolutionary elements of to-day—the wage-slave or Working Class, together with the materials whom its great cause attracts. In the first place, to slip is easy where to run is yet impossible. The primitiveness of production made it, I explained, impossible for the revolutionary element of Rome to accomplish its emancipation. In the second place, the steps of the Rome of 500 B.C. to 400 B.C. were not lighted by the experience of older civilisations. Not so to-day.

To-day the condition precedent for proletarian emancipation has been reached: the mechanism of production has reached the point where "the wheels move of themselves." No longer are civilised conditions for some predicated upon the unavoidable privations of any, let alone of most. Civilised conditions are to-day possible for all; and the class interests of the revolutionary class—the Working Class—dictate the programme, the collective ownership of the land and the tools with which to work; in short, the Co-operative Commonwealth, or Socialist Republic. Furthermore, to-day we need not grope in historic darkness. The past throws its light, and no flickering light it is, across our path, to guide our steps. By that light we may read the strategic significance of the Labour Leader; by that light we may perceive him to embody, as the Plebs Leader did of old, these fortuitous circumstances that, unless made decided front against, certainly will nullify all the possibilities for good of the age, turn awry "enterprises of great pith and moment," and make them lose the name of action. The blindness of the Roman revolutionary elements was pardonable: blindness on our part would be unpardonable to-day. The army that operates upon hostile territory may not "ignore" a strategic post from which it may be mowed down; nor should a parrot-like recitation of Socialist philosophy be allowed to lull the Socialist Movement into imaginary safety.



Fain, no doubt, would the Capitalist Class of to-day smash the Labour Leader and, along with him, the "organised labour" that he operates, but no more so than, and for the same reason, that the Roman patriciate would gladly have smashed the Plebs Leader, together with the organisation on and which he operated. Why should we expect the modern usurping class to have less wit than the patriciate of Rome in utilising a popular delusion, and seeking to curb labour with the aid of the Labour Leader? We have seen the patriciate do the trick, though at the cost of no mere trifles yielded by it to the Plebs Leader; why should the modern capitalist be supposed to be less "clever," especially seeing that mere bones to gnaw at suffice to cause the Labour Leader hound to do his bidding?

But we are past the point of "expecting," "supposing" and "speculating" upon the subject. Hanna's imitation, premature though it is, of Camillus's Temple to the Goddess of Concord removes all conjecture. Along with twenty-four active limbs of capitalism, we find in the niches of Hanna's Temple to the Goddess of "Industrial Peace" a choice collection of twelve Labour Leaders—Samuel Gompers; John Mitchell, President of the United Mine Workers; Frank P. Sargent, Grand Master Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen; Theodore Shaffer, President Amalgamated Association of Iron Steel and Tin Workers; James Duncan, General Secretary Granite Cutters; Daniel J. Keefe, President Longshoremen's Association; James O'Connell, President International Association of Machinists; Martin Fox, President Iron Moulders; James Lynch, President International Typographical Union; Edward E. Clark, Grand Chief Order of Railway Conductors; Harry White, General Secretary United Garment Workers, and W. Macarthur, Editor *Coast Seamen's Journal*, each of whom, without exception, prates of "Harmony between Employer and Employee"; in other words, each of whom upholds the capitalist system of society. This should be warning enough.

I mean not to, I shall not here, take a hand in the discussion that is going on in our Party press on the Socialist Trade and Labour Alliance. Nevertheless, at this point I must quote a passage from Letter XX in that discussion. Comrade Francis A. Walsh, of Lynn, says there:

"If by some great strike taking place the workers turned in the direction of the ballot box, if the Socialist Trade and Labour Alliance was not there to guide them right, they would naturally elect the labour fakirs to office who happened to be misleading them, and by so doing they would defeat the purpose of their own spontaneous, honest, well intended movement."

I admit the dialectic point that it does not follow because a certain thing is bad, therefore a certain other is the proper means to remove it. Such a conclusion would need demonstration. Accordingly, I here leave aside that part of this passage which argues that the Socialist Trade and Labour Alliance is needed to avoid the particular danger that he points out. What I here want to underscore is the point made, that the Labour Leader—"Labour Fakir" is the term he uses—would, under ordinary circumstances, naturally be chosen by the rank and file to head their political outbreaks and that the Working Class would thereby unintentionally defeat their own honest and serious purposes. The Labour Leader would sell out. The Lynn Comrade there hit a nail, and no unimportant one, squarely on the head; so squarely that the blow rings. Moreover, there is nothing to prevent the Labour Leader from committing

to memory a few Socialist phrases—the more scientifically sonorous all the better for his purpose—and thus adding to the delusion of "Labour" that of "Socialism" in his favour. Indeed, the trick is already being tried. And thus, as I stated in my introductory remarks, abstract scientific dissertations, unaccompanied with accurate knowledge on the military topography, so to speak, of the field of the Social Question, may redound to the undoing of the Socialist Movement.

In the fire of the revolutionary discontent during the formative period from 500 B.C. to 400 B.C., the Roman Commonwealth was forged awry into a weapon of eventual national suicide. Let there be no fatalism in our councils. The Socialist Republic is no predestined inevitable development. The Socialist Republic depends, not upon material conditions only; it depends upon these—plus clearness of vision to assist the evolutionary process. Nor was the agency of the intellect needful at any previous stage of social evolution in the Class Struggle to the extent that it is needful at this, the culminating one of all.

Is the revolutionary class of this Age living under ripened conditions to avail itself of its opportunity and fulfil its historic mission? Or is the revolutionary spark of our Age to be smothered and banked up till, as in the Rome of old, it leap from the furnace, a weapon of national suicide? In sight of the invasion of the Philippine Islands and the horrors that are coming to light, is there any to deny that the question is a burning one?

The answer depends to-day, not upon a knowledge of scientific Socialist economics and sociology alone. It depends upon that and, hand in hand with that, upon an accurate knowledge of the strategic features of the field. Nor is there a strategic post that the Socialist or Labour Movement should keep its weather eye more firmly on and take more energetic measures against than the Labour Leader.

As the Plebs Leader of old was a strategic post of peculiar strength for the patriciate and of mischief for the proletariat, so and for like reasons is the Labour Leader of to-day nothing but a masked battery, from behind which the Capitalist Class can encompass what it could not without—the work of enslaving and slowly degrading the Working Class, and, along with that, the work of debasing and ruining the country.



## II.—THE WARNING OF THE GRACCHI.

COMRADES OF SECTION NEW YORK,—

The purpose of this second page from Roman history, "The Warning of the Gracchi," is in a measure supplementary to the first. The first page, "Plebs Leaders and Labour Leaders," was strategic, this one is tactical. The first pointed out a peculiar danger that threatens the Socialist or Labour Movement from without; this one is to point out an inherent weakness of our forces under fire. As the first was intended for aggression, this one is intended for precaution.

### LAW OF REVOLUTIONARY SUCCESSION.

The Socialist is not like the chicken in the fable that, having on its back still a bit of the shell of the egg from which it just crawled, looked out into the world and said: "Why, as things are, they have always been, and will be." The Socialist, whether with such a shell on his back or not, knows that, as things are, they have not always been; and he knows that neither will they always remain so.

The Socialist looks back over history and finds "things," so far from being in a state of placid, stable equilibrium, convulsed by violent upheavals; and he shrewdly surmises the end is not yet.

The Socialist looks below the agitated surface of that agitated mass, and he discovers that its aspect is not that of turmoil and chaos, merely. He discovers there is a succession of well marked social changes, many of them having existed and gone down long before his days, and been succeeded by others, that also disappeared before he was born, to make place for the social system under which he now lives.

The Socialist looks still closer, and he recognises in these social changes, not merely a succession, but a progression of revolutions. He perceives that it is not a case of "wave following wave," but a case of development.

With eyes increasingly trained, the Socialist detects the active agency in each of these progressive upheavals. Each of these upheavals is found to mark the downfall and extinction of a Ruling Class, achieved by a Ruled Class, which, in turn, develops and enthrones itself on a new Ruled Class, which, again in its turn, supplants its oppressors; and so on.

Finally, equipped with the key that these researches fit him out with, the Socialist fathoms the secret of the force latent in, and that brings on this progression of revolutions. It is the law of economic evolution. Every Ruling Class represents a distinct economic system, born of that

that went before. The overthrow of a Ruling Class means the overthrow of its economic system. When the economic system of a Ruling Class has worn out, when it has been sapped by the economic system carried in the womb of the then subject class, it is cast aside. The downfall of a prevailing social or economic system is conditioned upon the ripeness of the economic system next in order to substitute it; and the executor of such fiat in social evolution is the subject class, whose class interests dictate the new system, and that then takes the reins of government.

One illustration will do for all. Going no further back than the feudal system, it is seen to have declined in the measure that—nursed into vigour by the sheltering boughs of the very tree of feudalism—there rose and gathered strength a new economic system, that was able to sap the feudal system and render the feudal lords dependent upon it. Feudal rule was grounded on *land*. All the same, among the subject class—the bourgeoisie, or future Capitalist Class—there rose a new, the capitalist economic system, grounded on *capital*, slowly undermining the foundation of the Ruling Class, until the day came when an economic system different from its own held it by the throat. And then came the toppling over; and then came the struggle; and the Capitalist Revolution was accomplished.

Along identical lines we notice things are proceeding to-day, under the capitalist system. Again—nursed into vigour by the sheltering boughs of the capitalist tree itself—there has been rising and gathering strength a new economic system, that is sapping the capitalist system and rendering the modern Ruling Class, the Capitalist Class, dependent upon it. Capitalism is grounded upon the *individual* operation and ownership of the machinery of production. And again, among the now subject class—the Proletariat, or Working Class—there has risen, obedient to their own class interests, a new economic system—Socialism, grounded on the *collective* operation and ownership of the machinery of production. The Socialist economic system has been gradually undermining the capitalist: individualism in production is vanishing. When the economic principles of a Ruling Class are worn out, that class itself is nearing its *finale*. The Capitalist Class is on its last legs. When matters came to that pass in feudal days, the victory of capitalism followed inevitably, as night does day. Is the victory of Socialism, the emancipation of the Working Class, therefore equally inevitable?

The danger is natural, and, therefore, serious, of drawing automatic—or, as the Germans call it—*schlabane*—conclusions. "The Feudal System," one often hears asserted from many a sincere Socialist source, "overthrew the theocratic system; the capitalist system overthrew the feudal system; the Socialist system *must*, therefore, inevitably overthrow the capitalist system." Some put it this way: "Theocratic rule was overthrown by the Feudal Class; the Feudal Class was overthrown by the Capitalist Class; therefore the Proletariat *will* overthrow the Capitalist Class." And they consider that, by saying that, all is said that is to be said on the matter. At best these automatic reasoners may grant the usefulness of stimulating the people at large, the proletariat in particular, with descriptions of the beauties of the Socialist New Jerusalem; and there you are. The Capitalist Class will stand by, cap in hand, and allow the Proletariat—some call it "the people"—to step in—and there you have your Socialist Republic.



Socialist science is no automatic affair. It knows and teaches that nothing is the result of any one, but of many causes, operating together. Accordingly, Socialist science submits to the microscope the solemn procession of past class uprisings. The additional observations thus gathered disclose this important fact: The Working Class, the subject class upon whom depends the overthrow of Capitalism and the raising of Socialism, differs from all previous subject classes called upon by history to throw down an old and set up a new social system.

Going again no further back than the days of Feudalism, the distinctive mark of the bourgeoisie, or the then revolutionary class, was the possession of the material means essential to its own economic system; on the contrary, the distinctive mark of the proletariat to-day is the being wholly stripped of all such material possession. While wealth, logically enough, was the badge of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, poverty, likewise logically enough, is the badge of the proletariat. The sign, the symptom, the gauge of bourgeois ripeness, as of the ripeness for emancipation of all previous subject classes, was their ownership of the physical materials essential to their own economic system; the sign, on the contrary, of the proletariat, is a total lack of all material economic power—a novel accompaniment to a revolutionary class, in the whole range of Class Revolutions.

Does this difference establish a difference in kind between the proletariat and the old bourgeoisie as a revolutionary class? It does not. But it does establish a serious difference in the tactical quality of the two forces, a difference that imparted strength to the former revolutionary forces under fire, while it imparts weakness to the proletariat.

There was nothing imaginable the feudal lord, for instance, could do to lure the bourgeois from the path marked out to it. Holding the economic power, capital, on which the feudal lords had become dependent, the bourgeois was safe under fire. All that was left to Feudalism to manoeuvre with was titles. It might bestow these hollow honours, throwing them assops to the leaders of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was not above "rattles and toys," but not all such "rattles and toys" could have led the bourgeois revolution into the ground. On the contrary. If already stripped of economic power, the feudal lords had also stripped themselves of exclusive feudal filigrees, they would only have abdicated all the sooner. A "good king," a "soft-hearted duchess," might have stayed the striking arm for a while. The striking arm was bound to come down. Wealth imparts strength; strength self-reliance. Where this is coupled with class interests, whose development is hampered by social shells, the shell is bound to be broken through. The process is almost automatic.

Differently with the proletariat. It is a force, every atom of which has a stomach to fill, with wife and children with stomachs to fill, and, withal, a precarious ability to attend to such urgent needs. Cato the Elder said in his usual blunt way: "The belly has no ears." At times this circumstance may be a force, but it is only a fitful force. Poverty breeds lack of self-reliance. Material insecurity suggests temporary devices. Sops and lures become captivating baits. And the one and the other are in the power of the present Ruling Class to manoeuvre with.

Obviously the difference I have been pointing out between the

bourgeois and the present, the proletarian, revolutionary forces shows the bourgeois to have been sound, while the proletarian, incomparably more powerful by its numbers, to be afflicted with a certain weakness under fire, a weakness that, unless the requisite measures of counter-action be taken, must inevitably cause the course of history to be materially deflected. It is upon this vital point that the career of the Gracchi utters its warnings across the ages to the Socialist.

#### THE ROME OF THE GRACCHI.

The Rome of the Gracchi—about 100 B.C.—was the Rome of 400 B.C., the time when the address "Plebs Leaders and Labour Leaders" closed, only with the then existing evils intensified by 300 years. All the causes that, 300 years previous, brought on those evils were at work now, only with the added swing of 300 years' additional momentum. To those causes there should be added just one, so as to help explain and complete the picture.

Actuated by the giddy notions of aristocracy that had seized the Ruling Class, it took the fancy of being the lords of large cattle and sheep ranges, rather than of farms. It carried on its designs in this way: Corn was imported free from Sicily and the Asiatic possessions. That rendered valueless, at least not marketable, the corn raised in Italy. Rome having by that time become mistress of all Italy, this policy spread ruin over the whole peninsula. The farmers were bankrupted; their farms were expropriated, and these were added to the lands of the ruling Romans, who thus changed the face of the Italian soil into immense cattle ranges and sheep walks, run entirely by slaves.

The social-economic situation of the time is summed up graphically in the words of Tiberius Gracchus, which I quoted in the course of the first address of this series, to indicate the utter hollowness of the Plebs Leader victories, as far as the middle class and the proletariat were concerned. I shall quote it here again for the sake of completeness:—

"The wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing left but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitations, they wander from place to place with their wives and children; and their generals do but mock them, when, at the head of their armies, they exhort their men to fight for their sepulchres and domestic gods; for, among such numbers, perhaps there is not a Roman who has an altar that belonged to his ancestors, or a sepulchre in which their ashes rest. The private soldiers fight and die, to advance the wealth and luxury of the great; and they are called masters of the world, while they have not a foot of ground in their possession."

A language that reminds one of the language of the Nazarene, about 150 years later.

When to this is added that a horde of 14,000,000 slaves is said to have been then in Italy; that not 2,000 families were possessed of solid wealth, and that the vertigo had reached the point that a Roman knight, finding himself bankrupt, tried his luck by freeing his slaves, having them elect him their king, and starting a servile uprising, which, of course, was speedily suffocated, a picture may be formed of the social condition of the Rome of the Gracchi.

As to the political situation, it had remained unchanged, barring one circumstance that is of importance, having quite a bearing on this subject.



Rome, like most of the empires of antiquity, was a city empire. Like Athens, like Sparta, like Carthage, Rome was a city-government, a city-commonwealth, and one may say she was ruled on democratic principles, in the sense that all those who had a right to a say in the government had a say *directly*, by appearing at the Forum, at the market place, at a certain place, and there giving their vote. The territorial expansion of Rome brought on a change.

So long as Rome was absorbing only tribes contiguous to the city the Roman citizen who settled upon the newly acquired territory could, with comparative ease, appear in Rome on election, or voting, day, and have his voice heard. In the measure, however, that the conquered territories lay further and further away, this direct participation in the government became more difficult. When, finally, all Italy was a Roman possession, even the Roman citizen colonists were *de facto*, though not *de jure*, disenfranchised. Presence at the Forum in Rome was out of the question.

Somehow the minds of the ancients ran up against a dead wall in face of the problem thus presented. Modern civilisation has solved the problem through "representative government." In Washington, for instance, the laws are enacted that govern this vast country, infinitely larger than the Italy that Rome owned. The laws proceed from Washington, but it is not the people of Washington that enact the laws. The laws are enacted by representatives of the whole country, chosen by the whole people, and in that way the whole people actually legislate. If the laws as passed do not suit them, theirs is the fault. A country can now consist of so many active citizens that it would be impossible for them all to meet and legislate, and yet, however far apart they may reside, they can exercise the suffrage and control the national legislation. Representative government makes that possible.

Antiquity had no conception of this. As the Roman citizen abroad in Italy had none but a potential vote—potential inasmuch as it became actual only by his presence in Rome—the Italians, who had not been turned into slaves, were mere political pariahs. They were ruled from Rome. This brought on a social alignment of dire results. Economically, the Italian population, Rome included, remained divided between the landlord-plutocrat and the proletarian classes, with the middle class cutting ever less of a figure; but both these classes fell again into two hostile camps, with the line of cleavage drawn by the Roman suffrage. On the one side stood the denizens of Rome, rich and poor together; on the other stood the Italians outside of Rome, poor and rich together. Now, then, by the slow alluvial accretions of over 500 years of habit, the ragged Roman proletarian came to consider himself a limb of the ruling power, held together with the Roman landlord-plutocrat by a common bond of political superiority over the vast numbers of free peoples in Italy, outside of Rome.

We have seen, in the course of the address on "Plebs Leaders and Labour Leaders" the baneful results of the superstition that enabled the bourgeois plebeian, under the cloak of the common designation of "Plebeian," to pull the wool over the eyes of his "fellow plebeians," the proletariat and middle class, just as in our own days the Labour Leader does to his "fellow labouring men," under the cloak of the common designation of "Labour." So now. Whenever the question came of

granting the franchise to the Italians, the downtrodden proletarian of Rome joined his oppressors in violent opposition to sharing with the Italians "the purple of government."

I hope I have made the point clear enough to warrant the conclusion that the situation that confronted the Gracchi at about 100 B.C. had passed the stage of reform. No tinkering could any longer stand. No enactment of "laws" and waiting for their slow operation could then touch the evils that afflicted Rome, and, along with Rome, her Italian domain. The day for constitutional methods was gone by. Whenever a nation has reached that point, there are no longer "institutions" in existence: the institutions have become shadows. There is extant nothing but *usurpation*. In such emergencies nothing short of revolution is in order.

Such were the conditions that confronted the Gracchi, and which they addressed themselves to correct. Did they realise the nature of the task before them? Did they understand the qualities, the tactical strength and the tactical weakness of the material at hand to accomplish their task with? In putting these two questions, I am dividing into two a question that can hardly be divided. They are like the obverse and reverse of a medal. They are the two sides of one and the same thing: the task to be accomplished and the element necessary to accomplish it with. Did the Gracchi understand that? I shall show you that they did not, and from the series of blunders that they committed, and the dire result of their blunders, we to-day, in the Rome of to-day, should take warning.

#### THE GRACCHIAN TACTICS.

The Gracchi were two brothers of distinguished extraction and connection—Tiberius, the elder; Gaius, the younger. They did not figure together; they figured successively. Tiberius began in 133 B.C. His work was cut short by assassination committed by the Senators. Gaius took up the work of Tiberius a few years later, and carried it on successfully for a while, in the teeth of the Senate, until, left in the lurch by the proletariat, he fled from Rome, and committed suicide in the contiguous Grove of the Furies. And that ended it in 121 B.C. This constitutes the Gracchian episode, strictly speaking. Its start, however, should be placed several years earlier, in certain incipient reformatory movements, the forerunners of the Gracchian episode proper. The whole period would, accordingly, cover something like a generation, reaching its climax in the Gracchi.

And now, as to the series of steps taken to accomplish the gigantic task in hand. I shall not here go into a detailed account of the numerous legislative enactments of this period. It is not necessary, any more than in my previous address, a detailed account of the Roman constitution was needed. That would only surcharge the picture. The salient and successive acts will answer all practical purpose.

#### FIRST ACT.

The first act of this period consisted in a reform of the suffrage. You will remember that the Roman suffrage was exercised by Centuries; that the Centuries were military divisions of the people, ranked according to



property; that the highest Centuries, including the Knights, had the fewest numbers and the largest vote; that the Knights and the First Century together polled 97 votes, an absolute majority of the 193 polled by all, and that the order of voting was according to the rank of the Centuries, so that if, as happened usually, the first two agreed, the others were not called upon to express their opinion, seeing the voting was by word of mouth.

All this was certainly vexatious. The majority of the citizens were placed at a decided disadvantage: wealth preponderated, poverty was aggravated. The Gracchian Movement attacked this wrongful system first. But how? Did it restore the preponderance of power to where it belonged? No. It tinkered around the form, and merely reduced the evil. It lowered the vote of the First Century from 80 to 70, so that, instead of the first two, it now required the solid vote of the first three Centuries to carry the day. Instead of two Centuries having the power to out-vote five, three Centuries—still a minority—were left with power to out-vote four. And the shuffling was carried a step further by the provision that the Centuries were to vote promiscuously and not by rank, as formerly—as though trump cards became any the less trumps by the order in which they were played. There was a third provision that properly comes under this head. It preceded the others. It was a provision for a secret ballot—thereby attuning a vast revolutionary purpose to clandestine methods.

#### SECOND ACT.

The Licinian law, described in full in the address on "Plebs Leaders and Labour Leaders," had remained a dead letter. The Licinian law among other things, limited the number of additional acres that could be acquired by an individual from the public domain. Despite its provisions, the landlord-plutocracy had proceeded, if anything, more high-handedly than ever, to appropriate what it never had a right to, State property; but, moreover, did so now in violation of express enactments. The Sempronian law—so called from the middle name, Sempronius, of the Gracchi—dug up the old Licinian law, and, at a time when even its provisions had lost whatever curative power there may have been in them 300 years before, proposed, not the old Licinian law in all its fullness, but that law in a diluted form. Besides the number of acres allowed by the Licinian law to be appropriated from the public lands, one-half the number was now allowed in addition to each holder for each son; the remainder was to be redistributed, and indemnity was provided for possible property expropriated from the expropriator. The Sempronian law was a compromise with Usurpation.

#### THIRD ACT.

But although Tiberius Gracchus sought to circumvent the Revolution, the Counter-Revolution promptly locked horns with him. His colleague in office had the power to block him, and he did; at least he tried to. His support was constitutionally necessary for the enactment of the law. "Seen" by his patriciate colleagues, Tiberius's colleague refused his sanction, and though at times he wavered under the fervid pleas of Tiberius, he finally resisted all entreaties and even threats. For a moment

Tiberius seems to have caught a glimpse of the revolutionary requirements of the task he had set his cap to. He threw legality to the dogs. "Unconstitutionally" he ordered the proletariat to depose his colleague, and, walking roughshod over the tatters of the torn Constitution, pushed the law through.

But the glimpse of the requirements of his task, caught by Tiberius for a moment, vanished as soon as caught. Instead of fanning to a flame the spark that his conduct had kindled in the breast of the revolutionary mass behind him, he grew apologetic, sought refuge and justification in legal parallels, and thus cooled off and extinguished the spark.

The Senators were not slow in taking advantage of the reaction in their favour. Tiberius speedily fell by their hands, clubbed to death in plain view of the populace that stood by, or ran off awestricken.

#### FOURTH ACT.

Four years later Gaius took up the work where his brother Tiberius had been forced to drop it.

Gaius saw the Senators' hands red with his brother's blood, and looked upon that body as the barrier against which Tiberius had been dashed. Gaius determined to protect himself against danger from that quarter, first of all. How? By sweeping it away? No. By raising a rival to it. Did he, then, at least raise the rival power to the dreaded Senate out of the revolutionary forces at his back? Yet, again, no.

The Equestrian Order, the Knights, consisted of the same economic interests that had been incensed at the measures of Tiberius, and they, though not the direct perpetrators of his assassination, had seconded, and rejoiced in, and profited by the crime. To all intents and purposes, they were as guilty as the Senate itself. And yet that element it was that Gaius Gracchus turned to. He halved the powers of the Senate and clothed the Equestrian Order therewith. When warned, his answer was "I am raising an enemy to the Senate: the Senate and the Equestrian Order will kill each other off." We shall see whether they did.

#### FIFTH ACT.

For a while the Gracchian policy seemed successful. Senate and Equestrian Order did get into each other's hair. In the meantime, anxious to strengthen his own hands in a positive, and not merely negative, way, Gaius put through successively two laws, which set the coping stone on the series of Gracchian blunders, and, watched by the light of certain modern occurrences, look as if enacted for the express purpose of causing the Gracchian tactics to serve as a bell-buoy to warn the Socialist Movement of this generation of sunken rocks in its course.

The first of these was a law providing for three colonies. With funds from the Roman Treasury, these colonies were to be set up, outside of Italy, of course, so as to afford immediate relief to the proletarian mass. The patriciate promptly parried the thrust. It outbid Gaius for popularity with the proletariat by offering them twelve colonies.

#### SIXTH ACT.

The second of these two laws was a provision for the free distribution of corn among the poor. The proletarian masses, the revolutionary class, were expected by that measure in particular to become firmly attached to their leader—like domestic animals or children to him who feeds them.



Proceeding along these lines, and having arrived at this point, Gaius Gracchus thought himself in condition to take up a question that his penetration told him was a *sine qua non* to all lasting improvement in the condition of Italy, and, withal, the most ticklish, in view of the existing popular prejudices and habits of thought. That question was the question of the Italian franchise. But the moment he mentioned the subject, it was as if by magic touch he had solidified the denizens of Rome against himself. Knights and Senators suspended their wranglings, on the one hand, and, on the other, all recollection of the "improved form of suffrage" in Rome; all recollection of the Sempronian law; all expectations of relief from the prospective three colonies; aye, all gratitude for free corn was forgotten and thrown to the winds. So completely did the proletariat fall away from its idol that the Senate and Knights found no difficulty in fomenting a sedition against him. Forsaken by all but a few close friends and one devoted slave, Gaius first took refuge in the Temple of Diana, where, falling on his knees, he implored the gods to punish the Romans with eternal slavery for their base ingratitude. Beseeched to save himself for better days, Gaius left the Temple and fled from the city across the river. But his pursuers were hot upon him, and suicide freed him from further agony in the Grove of the Furies.

#### CANONS OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION.

Out of the shipwreck of the Gracchian Movement and tactics ten planks come floating down to our own days. They may be termed the warnings uttered by the shades of the Gracchi. They may be erected into so many Canons of the Proletarian Revolution. These canons dovetail into one another. At times it is hard to keep them apart, so close is their inter-relation, seeing they are essentially differentiations of a central idea thrown up by the singular nature, already indicated, of the proletariat as a revolutionary force:—

##### 1. *The Proletarian Revolution Abhors Forms.*

It was a blunder of the Gracchian Movement to devote time and energy to the changing of the forms of the suffrage. The characteristic weakness of the proletariat renders it prone to lures. It, the least favoured of all historic revolutionary classes, is called upon to carry out a revolution that is pivoted upon the most complicated synthesis, and one withal that is easiest to be obscured by the dust that its very foe, the Capitalist Class, is able to raise most plentifully. The essence of this revolution—the overthrow of Wage Slavery—cannot be too forcefully held up. Nor can the point be too forcefully kept in evidence that, short of the abolition of Wage Slavery, all "improvements" either accrue to Capitalism, or are the merest moonshine where they are not sidetracks.

It matters not how the voting is done; it matters not whether we have the Australian ballot or the Maltese ballot; it matters not whether we have the secret ballot or the *viva voce* ballot—aye, if it comes to it, it should not matter whether we have the ballot at all. All such "improvements"—like the modern "ballot reforms" and schemes for "referendums," "initiative," "election of Federal Senators by popular vote," and what not—are, in the very nature of things, so many lures to allow

the revolutionary heat to radiate into vacancy. They are even worse than that: they are opportunities for the usurper to prosecute his own usurpatory purposes under the guise, aye, with the aid and plaudits of his victims, who imagine they are commanding, he obeying their bidding—as we see happening to-day.

The proletariat's chance to emerge out of the bewildering woods of "Capitalist Issues" is to keep his eyes riveted upon the economic interests of his own Class—the public ownership of the land on and the tools with which to work—without which the cross he bears to-day will wax ever heavier, to be passed on still heavier to his descendants. No "forms" will stand.

##### 2. *The Proletarian Revolution is Relentlessly Logical.*

Often has the charge been made against the Socialist Labour Party that it is "intolerant," that its officers are "unyielding." The Proletarian Revolution can know no "tolerance," because "tolerance" in social dynamics spells "inconsistence." Tiberius Gracchus overlooked the principle, and all that therefrom flows, in his revamped Licinian law. If the Sempronian law meant anything; if the attitude of Tiberius, together with that of the proletarian mass that took him for its paladin, meant anything, it meant that the landlord-plutocracy of Rome was a criminal class—criminal in having plundered the Commonwealth of its estate, doubly criminal in turning its plunder to the purpose of degrading the people and thereby sapping the safety of the State. The only logical conclusion from such premises and posture is a demand for the unconditional surrender of the social felon. The Sempronian law, so far from taking this stand, took the opposite. By its confirmation, implied only though the confirmation was, of proprietary rights in stolen goods, by its provision for indemnity to the robbers, the Gracchian Movement became illogical; it thereby became untrue to itself. It truckled to Usurpation; it thereby emasculated itself.

With the Proletarian Revolution, not a point that it scores, not an act that it commits deliberately, not a claim that it sets forth may be at fisticuffs with one another, or with the principles that they are born of. Capitalism is a Usurpation: the Usurpation must be overthrown. Labour produces all wealth: all wealth belongs to Labour. Any act that indicates—or, rather, I shall put it this way; any action that, looking toward "gentleness" or "tolerance," sacrifices the logic of the situation, unnerves the Revolution. With the Proletarian Revolution, every proposition must be abreast of its aspirations; where not, it limps, it stumbles and falls.

##### 3. *Palliatives Are Palliations of Wrong.*

Plausible are the phrases concerning the "wisdom of not neglecting small things," and the suggestion to "accept half a loaf where a whole loaf cannot yet be had." The Gracchian Movement yielded to this optical illusion. Even the old Licinian law, much more so its revamped form of a Sempronian law, was cast in that mould. "All that the people were entitled to they could not get." They were to have a "first instalment," a slice of what was due; in short, a palliative. The Gracchian Movement thereby gave itself a fatal stab.

If the palliative could trammel up the consequence; if it could be the



be-all and end-all here, then, what ills might flow might be ignored as neglectable quantities. But here also the relentless logic of the Proletarian Revolution commends the ingredients of his poisoned chalice to the bungler's own lips.

In the first place, the same hand that reaches out the "palliative" to the *wronged*, reaches out the "palliation" to the *wrong*. The two acts are inseparable. The latter is an inevitable consequence of the former. Request a little, when you have a right to the whole, and your request, whatever declamatory rhetoric or abstract scientific verbiage it be accompanied with, works a subscription to the principle that wrongs you. Worse yet: the "palliative" may or may not—and more frequently yes than otherwise—be wholly visionary; the "palliation," however, is ever tangible; tangible to feeling as to sight; no visionariness there. The palliative, accordingly, ever steels the wrong that is palliated.

In the second place, the palliative works the evil of inoculating the Revolutionary Force with a fundamental misconception of the nature of the foe it has to deal with. The tiger will defend the tips of his moustache with the same ferocity that he will defend his very heart. It is an instinctive process. The recourse to palliatives proceeds from, and it imperceptibly inculcates the theory that he would not. It proceeds from the theory that the Capitalist Class will allow itself to be "pared off" to death. A fatal illusion. The body of Tiberius Gracchus, mangled to death by the landlord-plutocratic tiger of Rome, sounds the warning against the illusion. The tiger of Capitalism will protect its superfluities with the same ferocity that it will protect its very existence. Nothing is gained on the road of palliatives; all may be lost.

#### 4. *The Proletarian Revolution Brings Along its Own Code.*

When, at the critical stage of the revolution he was active in, Tiberius Gracchus took a "short cut across lots," and removed, regardless of "legality," the colleague that blocked his way, consciously or unconsciously he acted obedient to that canon of the Proletarian Revolution that it must march by its own light, look to itself alone, and that, whatever act it contemplates, it judges by the Code of Law, that, though as yet unformulated into statute, it is carrying in its own womb. When, afterwards, Tiberius looked for justification to the laws of the very class that he was arrayed against, he slid off the revolutionary plane, and dragged his revolution down, along with himself. The revolutionist who seeks the cloak of "legality" is a revolutionist spent. He is a boy playing at soldier.

It was at the Denver Convention of the American Federation of Labour, in 1894, that a scene took place which throws much light on the bearing of this particular point on the Movement of our own days. The A.F. of L., at a previous Convention, had ordered a general vote upon a certain "declaration of principles." Among these principles there was one, the tenth, which a certain class of people, who called themselves Socialists, were chuckling over with *naïve* delight. They claimed it was "Socialistic." One of their number had bravely smuggled it into the said "declaration." They were by that manoeuvre to capture the old style Trades Unions, and thereby "tie the hands of the Labour Leaders." For a whole year these revolutionists had been chuckling gaily and more loudly. The Unions actually polled a majority for all

the "principles," the celebrated "Plank 10" included. At the Denver Convention the vote was to be canvassed; but the Labour Leaders in control threw out the vote on the, to them, good and sufficient reason that "the rank and file did not know what they had been voting for." That is not the point; that is only the background for the point I am coming to. But before coming to that, let me here state that the rank and file meekly submitted to such treatment. The point lies in a droll scene that took place during the debate to throw out that vote. The scene was this:—

The revolutionist who had surreptitiously introduced "Plank 10" in the "declaration of principles," and thereby schemed to capture the Unions by ambush, a gentleman of English Social Democratic Federation antecedents, one Thomas J. Morgan, now of Chicago, was storming in that Denver Convention against the Labour Leaders' design to throw out his "Plank 10," and incidentally, as he expressed it himself, was "putting in fine licks for Socialism." Suddenly his flow of oratory was checked. A notorious Labour Leader, to whom the cigar manufacturers of America owe no slight debt of gratitude, Mr Adolf Strasser of the International Cigar-makers' Union, had risen across the convention hall, and put in:—

"Will the gentleman allow me a question?"

"Certainly."

"Do you favour *confiscation*?"

The answer is still due. Mr Morgan collapsed like a punctured toy-balloon.

The scene should have been engraved to preserve for all time pictorially the emasculating effect of ignorance of this canon of the Proletarian Revolution upon that venturesome man who presumes to tread, especially as a leader, the path of Social Revolution, notwithstanding he lacks the mental and physical fibre to absorb in his system the canon here under consideration.

As I said, the Proletarian Revolution marches by its own light; its acts are to be judged by the Code of Legality that itself carries in its fold, not by the standard of the existing Law, which is but the reflex of existing Usurpation. Indeed, in that respect, the Proletarian Revolution shares a feature of all previous revolutions, the Capitalist Revolution included. A new Social System brings along a new Code of Morals. The morality of the Code that the Proletarian Revolution is impregnated with reads like a geometric demonstration: Labour alone produces all wealth, Idleness can produce maggots only; the wealth of the land is in the hands of Idleness, the hands of Labour are empty; such hard conditions are due to the private ownership by the Idle or Capitalist Class of the land on and the tools with which to work; work has become collective, the things needed to work with must, therefore, also become collective property; get from under whosoever stands in the way of the inevitable deduction, by what name soever he may please to call it! Accordingly, no militant in the modern Proletarian Revolution can be knocked all of a heap by the howl of "Confiscation."

Plutarch, whom Prof. Lieber shrewdly suspects of responsibility for much of the revolutionary promptings of modern days, touching upon these two acts of Tiberius Gracchus, produces without comment—a severe sarcasm in itself—Tiberius's elaborate legal plea in defence of his removal of his colleague. A revolution that needs to apologize for itself



had better quit. And he comments upon the Sempronian law in these touchingly incisive terms :—

"There never was a milder law made against so much injustice and oppression; for they who deserved to have been punished for their infringement of the rights of the community, and fined for holding the lands contrary to law, were to have a consideration for giving up their groundless claims, and restoring the estates of such of the citizens as were to be relieved."

Preach to the Proletariat, in the most convincing way a man may please, the abstract principles of their own, the Socialist Revolution, and then let that man seek to sugar-coat the dose with suggestions or acts that imply the idea of "buying out the capitalists," and he has simply wiped out clean, for all practical purposes, all he said before: he has deprived the Revolution of its own premises, its pulse of its own warmth.

##### 5. *The Proletarian Revolution is "Irreverent."*

Karl Marx—the distinctive feature of whose philosophy is that it stands with its feet on earth, and is supremely practical—throws out, right in the midst of an abstract economic chapter, the point, that it is essential to the stability of Capitalism that the Proletarian look upon the conditions surrounding him as of all-time.

Reverence of the blind type is a fruit of latter-day Capitalism. Starting as an iconoclast, the capitalist winds up as a maw-worm. And it is essential to his safety that the proletarian masses take him seriously. The root of this blind reverence is the belief in the antiquity of the subject revered; and that implies the future, as well as the past. Capitalism, along with its gods, its gods along with it, are all pronounced "sacred," "ever were and ever will be, life without end." The capitalist fomenters such "reverence"; and, while he pushes his parsons forward to do the work, he holds himself out as the High Priest. The Usurper ever needs the cloak of sanctity; and therefore it is of importance to strip him bare of the cover.

The posture of Tiberius materially played into the hands of this useful capitalist deception. He cultivated reverence for the Magistracy. The plea in defence of his deposition of his colleague was a sanctification of the class of the Usurper. It riveted superstitious awe on the minds of the proletariat, whose striking arm never could be free until its mind was emancipated. When the reverentful proletarians trampled over one another, reverently to make way for the Senators, who, sticks and staves and broken furniture in hand, rushed forward to slay Tiberius, the luckless reformer could not have failed to notice that the arrow that killed him was steadied by a feather plucked from his own reformatory pinions.

Irreverence—not the irreverence of insolence, which is the sign-manual of the weak, but the self-sustained irreverence that is the sign-manual of the consciously strong because consciously sound—is one of the inspiring breaths of the Proletarian Revolution.

Reverence for the Usurper denotes mental, with resulting physical, subjection to Usurpation.

##### 6. *The Proletarian Revolution is Self-Reliant.*

The tactics of Gaius Gracchus in seeking support or protection in the Equestrian Order, by raising it to Senatorial powers, was a grave tactical misstep. Instead of inspiring the Proletarian Movement with self-reliance, he thereby trained it to lean on others than itself. The Proletarian Revolution must, under no circumstances, play the role of the horse in the fable.

You know the fable? It is a pretty one. A horse was being harassed by a lion. The horse found that his opportunities to graze were impaired by that roaring beast that lay low in the bushes and threatened to jump upon him, and frequently did jump upon him, and not infrequently scratched him to the point of bleeding; so that the horse, finding the area of his pasture narrowing, and his life threatened either way, entered into a compact with a man. According to agreement, the man mounted the horse, and by their joint efforts the lion was laid low. But never again could the horse rid himself of the man on his back.

By the action with which he clothed the Equestrian Order with the powers it had not formerly wielded, Gaius Gracchus certainly weakened the Senate, but he thereby, and in the same measure, extended the number of the political participants in the political usurpations, that had backed and brought on the social distress which he was combating. The Equestrian Order was of the identical class that profited by the Senatorial iniquities. By setting up the Equestrian Order with powers formerly wielded by the Senate alone, Gaius Gracchus was safer from the latter, but only in the sense that the horse in the fable was from the quarter of the lion after his alliance with the man. Gaius, like the horse, had saddled himself with a master. And the hour came when the master rode him to his death.

That it is a waste of time and energy for the proletariat to knock down the Democratic party, however oppressive that party may be, if the knocking down is to be done by saddling itself with the Republican party, a partner of the Democratic oppressor; that, however resentful the proletariat may be at a Republican President or Governor, who throws the armed force of the State or Nation, into the capitalist scales in the conflicts between employer and employee, it were a mere waste of energy to substitute them with their Democratic doubles: all that is elemental. The absurdity is illustrated by the fate of the horse in the fable. There can be no real knocking down of either party until they are both simultaneously knocked down; that knock-down blow is in the power of the proletariat only.

All this is elemental. But equally elemental, though the point be more hidden, should the principle be that the Proletarian Revolution must not only not seek, but must avoid, as it would a pestilence, all alliance with any other class in its struggles, or even its skirmishes, with the Capitalist Class, the landlord plutocracy of to-day. Here, again, the peculiar weakness of the proletariat, the proneness to yield to lures, manifests itself, and needs watchful guarding against by its Movement.

There is no social or economic class in modern society below the proletariat. It is the last on the list. If there were other classes below it, the Proletarian Revolution would not be what it is, the first of all with a world-wide, humane programme. All other classes, while seeking their own emancipation from the class that happened to be above, were grounded on the subjection of a class below. The Proletarian Revolution alone means the abolition of Class Rule. It follows from such a lay of the land that any class the proletariat may ally itself with must, though oppressed from above, itself be a fleecer's class; in other words, must be a class whose class interests rests on the subjugation of workers. Such a class is the modern Middle Class. It, like the man in the fable



I have just recited, can ally itself with the proletariat only with the design to ride it. However plausible its slogans, they are only lures.

So long as a Proletarian Movement seeks for "alliances abroad," it demonstrates that it has not yet got its "sea legs." Any such move or measure can only deprive it of whatever chance it had to develop and acquire them. The Proletarian Revolution is self-reliant. It is sufficient unto itself.

#### 7. The Proletarian Revolution Spurns Sops.

Sops are not palliatives. The two differ essentially. I have explained the palliative. The sop is not a "slice," an "instalment" ladled out in advance of what one is entitled to. It is an "extra," a "bon-bon," a narcotic, thrown out to soothe. Accordingly, the sop adds as little to the character and directedness of a Movement as does the palliative. The essential feature of the sop is, however, that it is a broken reed on which to lean, a thing no clearheaded revolutionist will ever resort to. It was upon just such a reed that Gaius Gracchus sought support when he proposed the establishment of three colonies for the relief of the Roman proletariat.

What could these colonies accomplish? In the first place they were in the nature of a desertion. The colonists were to leave Rome, the soil of Italy, in short, the battleground, to set up far away in Africa, in Spain, in Sardinia. But, above all, in what way could colonies relieve the distress in Rome, unless undertaken on a gigantic scale; that is to say, on a scale of wholesale migration from the city? And that would nullify their very purpose. At any rate to propose only three colonies was the merest sop thrown at his army. The revolutionist must never throw sops at the revolutionary element. The instant he does, he places himself at the mercy of the foe: he can always be out-sopped. And so was Gaius Gracchus. The proposition for twelve colonies with which the patriciate answered Gaius's proposition for three, completely neutralised the latter, leaving the "honours" on the side of the patriciate. Nursed at the teat of the sop, the Roman proletariat decamped to where they could get the largest quantities of that commodity. And that, more than any other thing, stripped Gaius of his forces. Once he was deserted and downed, the bigger sop of twelve colonies never materialised. It had answered its narcotic purpose, and was dropped.

On this very point, there is an all-round remarkable illustration, fresh from the oven. I here read to you a telegram sent from Chicago on April 2nd—only two weeks ago—to the *Milwaukee Social Democratic Herald*, and signed "Jacob Winnen." Referring to the vote polled in Chicago by a capitalist party proposition for "municipal ownership" the day before, the *Social Democratic Winnen* says:—"Two-thirds majority cast for municipal ownership shows that Socialism is in the air."

The labour field of Chicago has been convulsed a deal more than that of New York. As a result of that, or possibly due to the lake air, the capitalist politicians of Chicago are, if such a thing be possible, "quicker" than even the New York politicians. I admit that is saying a good deal. We have seen, even in New York, "municipal ownership" often, of late, used as a stalking-horse by individual politicians. Unterrified Socialist agitation has familiarised the public mind with Socialist aspirations, though still only in a vague way. The politician,

being "broad" besides "quick," has no objection to polling "Socialistic" votes. Being "quick" besides "broad," has no objection to the performance if he can indulge in it by giving the shadow for the substance; all the less if he can thereby run Socialism into the ground. "Municipal ownership" lends itself peculiarly to such purposes. It sounds "Socialistic"; and yet we know the term can conceal the archest anti-labour scheme. His nursery-tale theory concerning his God-given capacity to run industries having suffered shipwreck, the capitalist can find a snug harbour of refuge in "municipal ownership." It is an ideal capitalist sop to catch the sopable. We know all that. It is in view of all that that the Socialist Labour Party "municipal programme" has been drawn up as it is. It renders the Socialist Labour Party man sop-proof from that side. Accordingly, it is not surprising to find the "municipal ownership" sop or dodge in full blast among the Chicago politicians. It is there in such full blast that in the municipal campaign, which closed there with the election on April 1st, "municipal ownership" was a capitalist political party cry. The platform so declared it, and the speeches of the politicians of that party resounded with "municipal ownership" of railways, of gas plants, of electric plants—well, of everything in sight. And the Chicago politicians had sharp noses; how sharp may be judged from the double circumstance that the Socialist Labour Party vote at the election rose considerably, while the Social Democratic party—with a national platform declaration on "municipal ownership" that plays into the hands of the sop—went down so markedly that its statisticians have had to seek shelter for their diminished heads behind "percentages." Such, then, was the situation in Chicago. The intelligent Socialist perceives the sop of "municipal ownership" in that campaign; it cannot escape him. The large vote polled for that capitalist "municipal ownership" proposition, so far from smoothing, can only cause his brow to pucker. That vote discloses vast chunks of Socialist education left unattended to; vast masses left so untutored as to be caught by fly-paper. No cause for joy in the phenomenon. And yet this Social Democrat rejoices: "Two thirds majority cast for municipal ownership shows that Socialism is in the air."

"In the air!" Very much "in the air"—everywhere, except on Chicago soil.

Two-thirds majority cast for a municipal ownership proposition, emanating from a capitalist political party, "shows that Socialism is in the air," and is pointed to with joy! Can you imagine such childish fatuity? For this man, the Gracchi lived and laboured, bled, and died—in vain!

Let the modern revolutionist try the "municipal ownership" sop, and he will find himself out-municipal-ownshipped. Nothing there is more demagogic than Usurpation. For every one "municipal ownership" he may propose, the Capitalist Class will propose twelve; the same as, for every one colony proposed by Gaius Gracchus, the Senate out-sopped him with a proposition for four, drew his support away from him, and threw the threatened revolution flat on its back. And Gaius Gracchus had himself lent a hand. Every sop thrown by Gaius at the proletariat was a banana peel placed by himself under their feet. Of course they slipped and fell.

Not sops, but the unconditional surrender of capitalism, is the battle-cry of the Proletarian Revolution.



8. *The Proletarian Revolution is Impelled and Held Together by Reason, not Rhetoric.*

Speech is powerful. No doubt. But all is not said when that is said. The same nature of speech that answers in one instance fails to in another. Whatever the nature may be of the proper speech on other fields, on the field of the Proletarian Revolution it must be marked by sense, not sound; by reason, not rhetoric. The training of the Gracchi, of Gaius in particular, disqualified them in this. They had been tutored from infancy by Greek rhetoricians. Now rhetoric, like a ship, may cleave the waters of the Proletarian Revolution; but these close after it, and presently remain trackless.

Organisation is a prerequisite of the Proletarian Revolution. It is requisite by reason of the very numbers involved; it is requisite, above all, as a tactical protection against the tactical weakness that I have pointed out in the proletariat as a revolutionary force. Other revolutions could succeed with loose organisation and imperfect information. In the first place, they were otherwise ballasted; in the second, being grounded on the slavery of some class, a dumb driven herd of an army could fit in their social architecture. Otherwise with the proletariat. It needs information for ballast as for sails, and its organisation must be marked with intelligent co-operation. The proletarian army of emancipation cannot consist of a dumb driven herd. The very idea is a contradiction in terms. Now then, not all the fervid and trained rhetoric at the command of the Gracchi, and lavishly used by them, could take the place of the drill that the Roman proletariat needed on hard, dry information. The Gracchian rhetoric pleased, entertained, swayed, but did not organise; could not. At the first serious shock, their forces melted away—just as we have seen proletarian forces again and again melt away in our own days.

Rhetoric is the weapon of reform; it may plough the ground, it does not sow. The Proletarian Revolution wields the tempered steel of sterner stuff.

9. *The Proletarian Revolution Deals not in Double Sense.*

It is at its peril that a revolution conceals its purpose.

This is truest with the Proletarian Revolution. Gaius Gracchus had set his cap against the Senate. He conceived that body to be the embodiment of all evil. That he looked only at the surface of things appears from his conduct in clothing the Equestrian Order—men of the senatorial class—with senatorial power. Nevertheless, it is the Senate he sought to overthrow. In his mind that was the barrier against social well-being. His revolution aimed at the overthrow of the Senate. But he kept the secret locked in his breast, and only allowed it to peep through by indirection.

It is narrated of Gaius that, meaning to convey the idea that not the Senate, but the people, should be considered, he, differently from the orators of old, stood with his facetoward the Forum and not toward the Senate, in his public addresses. This was a bit of pantomime, unworthy a great Cause that called for plain language in no uncertain tones. By such conduct Gaius Gracchus could only raise dust over his designs. And that could have for its effect only to weaken him. It could not throw the affronted foe off their guard. On the other hand, it could only

keep away forces needful to his purpose, whom straightforward language would attract.

It is only the path to servitude that needs the gentle; the path to freedom calls for the ruder hand. Pantomimes, double sense and mummery may answer the purpose of a Movement in which the proletariat acts only the role of dumb driven beasts of burden. Pantomimes, mummery and double sense are utterly repellant to, and repelled by, the Proletarian Revolution.

I stated introductorily to the Canons of the Proletarian Revolution that they dovetailed in one another, seeing they all proceeded from a central principle. That central principle may be now taken up as the tenth of these canons. It sums them all up. You cannot have failed to perceive it peeping through all the others. It is this:—

10. *The Proletarian Revolution is a Character-Builder.*

The proletarian organisation that means to be tributary to the large army of proletarian emancipation cannot too strenuously guard against aught that may tend to debauch its membership. It must be intent upon promoting the character and moral fibre of the mass. Characterfulness is a distinctive mark of the Proletarian Revolution. Foremost, accordingly, in the long series of Gracchian blunders stands the measure of Gaius for the free distribution of corn. By that act he reduced the Roman proletariat to beggars. Beggars can only desert and compromise: they cannot carry out a revolution.

Their energies consumed with the tinkering on "forms;" their intellect cracked by illogical postures; their morale ruined by palliatives; the edge of their revolutionary dignity blunted by "precedents;" their mental vigour palsied by the veneration of the unvenerable; their self-reliance broken by leaning on hostile elements; their resolution warped by sops; their minds left vacant with rhetoric; their senses entertained with pantomimes; finally, their character dragged down to the ditch of the beggar—what wonder that, the moment the Roman proletariat were brought to the scratch, they acquitted themselves like beggars, made their peace with the Usurper, and left their leaders in the lurch?

The task is unthankful of submitting to rigid criticism the conduct of men of such noble aspirations as the Gracchi. Nevertheless, it must be recorded that, of all the distressing acts of the Gracchi, none compares with the conduct of Gaius when, finding himself forsaken by the masses that himself had debauched and thus virtually driven from him, he implored in the Temple of Diana eternal slavery for them in punishment for their "base ingratitude"—exactly as, in modern times, Utopians, turned reactionist, have been seen to do.

WARNINGS FROM THE PAST.

In the course of the first of these "Two Pages from Roman History," I pointed out the serious danger that lurked behind the automatic-mechanical system of reasoning on the domain of the Social Question. The man who would say: "The capitalist lives on the proceeds of labour; the more the capitalist gets, the less there is for the workingman; the more the workingman gets, the less there is for the capitalist; between the two there is an irrepressible conflict; harmony between them is impossible; therefore Mark Hanna's Industrial Peace Commission is bound to be a failure"—the man who would say that would speak truly. And yet grave was the blunder shown to be that such conclusion leads to, if it complacently stops there.



We saw wherein the danger lay, from a review of the career of the Plebs Leader. Between the patriciate and bourgeois plebeians, on the one hand, and the rest of the Plebeian Order, on the other, there was a conflict as irrepressible as that between Capitalist Class and Working Class. Concord between the two was out of question. Yet we saw what happened. The impossibility of concord between the exploiters and the exploited of Rome caused neither Camillus's Temple to the Goddess of Concord to crumble, nor the conditions which it was actually a landmark of, to break down. What happened was a continuance of social development. The development moved, we may say, along the resultant of the forces that lay in the "irrepressible conflict," and in the ignorance on the conflict, together with the manner in which it was handled. And we saw how dire the issue.

Just so with regard to my present subject. A mechanical, *schlabone* style of reasoning would blind us to the peculiar, the exceptional tactical weakness that the proletariat labours under as a revolutionary force. And the blindness would be fatal.

The Gracchian episode in Roman history supplemented the episode, whose close was marked by Camillus's Temple to the Goddess of Concord. Rough-hewn in the quarry of 500 B.C. to 400 B.C., the proletariat of Rome was 300 years later shaped into final shape in the smithy of the Gracchian tactics. And what was that shape? An army of legions, whose motto was a mockery of the Socialist maxim that we know to-day. The Socialist maxim is: "Workingmen, you have nothing to lose but your chains, and a world to gain!"—a world of human happiness, from your own noble efforts. The maxim that arose in the army of revolution that the Gracchi shaped was: "Proletarians, you have nothing to lose but your weapons, your sword and pike, and a world to gain!" From what? From the favour of your General! How? Through rapine. Would it, in these days of electric rapidity, take 500 years to shape the proletariat of the land into another world-fagot?

As in biology the same elements, submitted to different temperature and atmospheric pressure, will produce different substances, so in sociology. The Socialist Republic will not leap into existence out of the existing social loom, like a yard of calico is turned out by a Northrop loom. Nor will its only possible architect, the Working Class—that is, the wage earner, or wage slave, the modern proletariat—figure in the process as a mechanical force moved mechanically. In other words, the world's theatre of Social Evolution is not a Punch and Judy box, nor are the actors on that world's stage manikins, operated with wires.

As the first of these "Two Pages from Roman History," by drawing attention to a strategic danger that besets the path of the Socialist Movement, pointed to the urgency of proper methods of aggression, so this second Page, "The Warning of the Gracchi," by drawing attention to a tactical weakness of our own forces under fire, points to the precautions that the conditions demand.

And we then, to-day, in this country, the country that nearest comes to Rome since Rome went down—well may we look back to the lessons of those days. Well may we take to heart the career of the Plebs Leaders; well may we take to heart the tactical blunders of the Gracchi, and from the one and the other receive a warning for our conduct in this generation.



## PAMPHLETS TO READ

Reform or Revolution?	...	...	...	De Leon.	2d.
What Means this Strike?	...	...	...	De Leon.	2d.
Burning Question of Trades Unionism	...	...	...	De Leon.	2d.
Socialist Reconstruction of Society	...	...	...	De Leon.	3d.
Development of Socialism in Great Britain	...	...	...	...	2d.
Development of Socialism: Utopia to Science	...	...	...	Engels.	3d.
Historical Materialism	...	...	...	Engels.	2d.
Marx on Mallock	...	...	...	De Leon.	2d.
Communist Manifesto	...	...	...	Marx and Engels.	3d.
Socialism versus Anarchism	...	...	...	De Leon.	3d.
Wage Labour and Capital	...	...	...	Karl Marx.	3d.
Two Pages of Roman History	...	...	...	De Leon.	6d.
As to Politics	...	...	...	De Leon.	3d.
Why Revolution?	...	...	...	Karl Marx.	2d.
Craft Unionism or Industrial Unionism—Which?	...	...	...	...	2d.

*One Penny extra for postage*

---

### THE SOCIALIST

Official Organ of the Socialist Labour Party

*Published Monthly 1d. By Post 2d.*

---

## SOCIALIST LABOUR PRESS

39 SOUTH BRIDGE :: EDINBURGH, 1